

Chicago's First Urban Indians – the Potawatomi

by

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Dedication

To Irving (Hap) McCue and Daniel (Danny) Rapp – two elders who taught me more than they ever realized; and to my parents, Wilma and Joseph, who gave me opportunity.

Acknowledgements

Every book has many authors and the same is true for this dissertation. I am indebted to many individuals, institutions, and communities for making my work possible. I owe much to the Williams/Daugherty family who made their grandfather's papers available to me. I am also grateful for the kind assistance from the staffs at the Chicago History Museum archives, the special collections at the Clarke Memorial Library at Central Michigan University, Western Michigan University, the Rackham Graduate Library and the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan, the Harold Washington Library in Chicago, the Grand Rapids Public Museum, the Logan Museum at Beloit College, the Chicago American Indian Center, the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, the D'Arcy McNickle Center and special collections at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Pokagon State Park, and the Great Lakes Regional Branch of the National Archives. I also substantially benefitted from the financial support afforded by the award of a five year Rackham Merit Fellowship at the University of Michigan – without which I could not have pursued my dream of returning to academia. Thank you also to the Education Department of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and the Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago for their financial assistance during my graduate education.

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ABSTRACT
Chicago's First Urban Indians – the Potawatomi
by
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For the last several decades, scholars have been intrigued with the ways that some American Indians resisted assimilation into the mainstream of the dominant culture of the United States. “Chicago’s First Urban Indians – the Potawatomi”, examines the ways some Pokagon Potawatomi found to retain a distinct “American Indian” identity; the ways their resistance represented both their rejection of assimilation into the mainstream, and their desire for inclusion into the larger contemporary society without forfeiting their “Indianness.” The Chicago urban Indian experience did not begin with the post World War II federal programs of relocation of American Indians from reservations to urban areas. Rather, the Potawatomi (more specifically the Pokagon Potawatomi) have been a part of Chicago since its founding. In very public expressions of indigeneity, they have refused to hide in plain sight or assimilate. Instead, throughout the city's history, the Pokagon Potawatomi Indians have openly and aggressively expressed their refusal to be marginalized or forgotten - and in doing so they have contributed to the fabric and history of the city. Examining, in roughly chronological order, the literature and rhetoric of Simon Pokagon, the spectacles, performances, and monuments of the Potawatomi, their efforts for the restoration of territory, and their engagement with sport and recreation, this

dissertation reveals how these activities and practices preserved and promoted a Pokagon Potawatomi presence in the city.

Chapter 1

Prologue: Chicago's First Urban Indians – the Potawatomi

The Chicago urban Indian experience did not begin with the post World War II federal programs of relocation of American Indians from reservations to urban areas. Rather, the Potawatomi (more specifically the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians) have been a part of Chicago since its founding. In very public expressions of their indigeneity, the Pokagon Potawatomi have refused to hide in plain sight or assimilate into the mainstream. Instead, throughout the city's history, the Pokagon Potawatomi Indians have openly expressed their refusal to be marginalized or forgotten - and in doing so they have contributed to the fabric and history of the city.

My dissertation, *Chicago's "First" Urban Indians – the Potawatomi*, is a Pokagon Potawatomi tribal history of a community whose members have both refused to relinquish their native identities and maintained a conspicuous and continuous presence in the region. Chapter 2 is an orientation to the topics and themes of this dissertation and a review of the literature. Chapter 3 focuses on tribal leader Simon Pokagon and his novel *Queen of the Woods*, first published in 1899. In it, I explore the ways in which Pokagon's writing served as a memorial and monument to Native peoples. Simon Pokagon was a celebrity in Chicago during his lifetime and a featured speaker at the World's Columbian Exposition (WCE) in 1893. His novel, *Queen of the Woods*, serves as a rhetorical monument to the persistence and resiliency of the Potawatomi. His literary and speaking

efforts coupled with the materiality of his activities –such as selling his earlier work *The Red Man’s Greeting*, bound in birch bark, and erecting a birch bark tipi on the Midway during the Exposition - reminded both Natives and non-Natives alike that Chicago is built upon Potawatomi lands. The written and spoken words of Simon Pokagon claim a place in the history of the city, as well as assert a desire to be included in the future of that city. Chapter 4 examines the ways in which memorials, monuments and spectacles, by non-Natives, the Pokagon Potawatomi, and sometimes through collaborative efforts, have contributed to the presence of the Pokagon Potawatomi in Chicago. Chapter 5 examines a Potawatomi land claim to the Chicago lakefront that proceeded to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1917. Here, the key ideas include cultural geography and critical landscape studies as manifested in treaty rights, land cessions and land claims by American Indian peoples. The Potawatomi lawsuit for possession of the Chicago lakefront represented a claim to ancestral lands as well as an aggressive move toward the preservation of indigenous identity. Chapter 6 looks at the ways in which the Potawatomi and a non-Native by the name of George Wellington Streeter each played with ideas of discovery and frontier in their respective claims to the Chicago lakefront. Themes in this section include the middle ground in an urban context, contact zones, and transculturation. I also examine why Streeter’s claim to the Chicago lakefront is remembered and often written about while the claim by the Potawatomi is largely forgotten, and what this reveals about collective memories and *forgettings*. Chapter 7 begins with a biographical sketch of Leroy Wesaw (Pokagon Band Potawatomi), an early member of the Chicago American Indian Center (the first such urban Indian center in the nation) and founder of the Chicago Canoe Club in 1968. I examine the meanings of canoes and canoeing in post-

World War II Chicago and how the Potawatomi maintained a presence in Chicago through a canoe revival.

The themes of my dissertation include adaptive persistence, monuments, memory, and indigeneity, all of which I explore through the lenses of cultural geography, literature, law, material culture, and popular culture. Each chapter contributes to the larger narrative of the presence of the Pokagon Potawatomi throughout the history of the city of Chicago. While the dominant culture wrestled with its “Indian problem” – whether Indians could be assimilated – Potawatomi peoples themselves were “talking back”¹ by asserting a persistent indigenous identity while expressing a willingness to participate as contemporary Indian peoples in the maelstrom of American social, culture, and political life.

Methodology

This dissertation’s central question is what, if any, role has the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians played in the history of Chicago? To answer that question, I have used an interdisciplinary approach that includes the methodologies of ethnohistory, including archival research and participant observation. Along with the methodologies of anthropology and history, I also utilize cultural studies, critical legal studies, and sociology. My intent is to create a document that is valuable both to the Pokagon Potawatomi community and to others who are interested in the history of Chicago, American Indian history generally, and Indian/non-Native relations. This is a story of the urban Indian experience in Chicago from the Pokagon Potawatomi perspective. To explore those experiences I have written what LeAnne Howe calls a “tribalography” – a

¹ Frederick Hoxie first used this descriptor of Indian responses to Anglo expectations in Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back To Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (Boston: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 2001), 29-35.

weaving together of stories – that creates a deeper understanding of Native individual and community experiences. As LeAnne Howe notes, “... story creates attitudes and culture, the very glue which binds a society together.”²

Another influence is the work of Craig Womack, who twenty years ago stressed that valuable histories of Indian peoples are written at the community level.³

(w)e are not mere victims but active agents in history, innovators of new ways, of Indian ways, of thinking and being and speaking and authoring in this world created by colonial contact. Whatever we might say about the inherent problems concerning what constitutes an Indian viewpoint, we can still reasonably assert that such a viewpoint exists and has been silenced throughout U.S. history to the degree that it finally needs to be heard.⁴

I am a citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. Writing a dissertation about the Pokagon Potawatomi from an insider perspective has both advantages and difficulties. I suspect that one advantage is that I have had access to individuals and experiences that a non-tribal member would not. On the other hand, there may have been doors closed to me because of my status. More recently, a number of scholars have been supportive of insider research.⁵ Throughout the dissertation, I have striven to maintain objectivity and honesty. Craig Howe writes of the importance of working *with* Native communities when doing research that involves them.⁶ My research, interviewing, and writing have been done with a concerted effort at cooperation and communication while

² LeAnne Howe, "Tribalography: The Power of Native Stories," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 14 (1999): 117-125.

³ Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red, Native American Indian Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ Robert Alexander Innes, "Wait a Second. Who Are You Anyways?" *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 33, no. 4 (Fall 2009); Gail Dana-Sacco, "The Indigenous Researcher as Individual and Collective: Building a Research Practice Ethic within the Context of Indigenous Languages," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 34, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 61.

⁶ Craig Howe, "Keep Your Thoughts Above the Trees: Ideas On Developing and Presenting Tribal Histories," in *Clearing a Path, Theorizing the past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002), 161-173.

remaining true to tribal traditions of reciprocity and giving back. Most importantly, I have attempted to maintain my openness to suggestions and perspectives that contradicted my previous biases and expectations.

Very little has been written about the Pokagon Potawatomi by tribal members, and I feel a great sense of responsibility in chronicling the story of the Pokagon Potawatomi in Chicago. I have included my own voice and experiences where I felt them to be important to understanding the questions posited in this work. I am convinced that indigenous scholars have an important opportunity to add to deeper understandings of their own communities. It is an important act of self and community expression to do so. Gail Dana-Sacco, Ph.D., Director of the Wabanaki Center in Maine, which supports local indigenous scholarship, writes,

We Indigenous scholars can exercise more proactive leadership by practicing critical introspection and building strength and capacity from within our communities. By critical introspection I mean a regular, rigorous, reflective self-evaluation process in which we consider our Indigenous research and scholarship practice in the context of our accountability to the collective...⁷

I write with humility and vulnerability; knowing that what I write will affect both the Pokagon community and the perspectives of outsiders as well. During the course of this project, I have had many elders, from both the Pokagon Potawatomi and Chicago Indian communities advise me to tell the story of the Potawatomi in Chicago as honestly as I can, to be true to both the community that I write and the scholarship before me.

⁷ Gail Dana-Sacco, "The Indigenous Researcher as Individual and Collective: Building a Research Practice Ethic within the Context of Indigenous Languages," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 34, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 6.

The Potawatomi

The Potawatomi are indigenous peoples of North America associated at the beginning of the historical era with the upper Mississippi River region of what is now the United States. The Potawatomi language belongs to the Algonquian family. The Potawatomi people refer to themselves as Bodéwadmi, which means "Keepers of the Fire" in the Potawatomi language. This is a name given to them possibly by their Ojibwe cousins. The Potawatomi people originally referred to themselves as Neshnabé, a derivative of the Ojibwe/Odawa word, Anishinabe, meaning human beings.⁸ The Potawatomi people traditionally belonged to an alliance referred to as "the Three Fires Confederacy," along with the Ottawa and the Ojibwe. In this alliance, the Potawatomi people were deemed the "youngest brother."⁹ At the height of their expansion in the Midwest some two hundred and fifty years ago, the Potawatomi people numbered about 9,000 members and Potawatomi villages covered about 28,000 square miles of territory around the Great Lakes region, stretching east from what is now Green Bay, Wisconsin, and South around Lake Michigan to Detroit.¹⁰

Anthropologists generally theorize that the direct ancestors of Indian peoples migrated to North America from eastern Asia, traveling by land across what is now the Bering Strait to Alaska or by water along the southern coast of the so-called land bridge. Traditional stories tell of the Potawatomi being created spontaneously from the breath of the Creator at the mouth of the Grand River on the western shore of what is now called

⁸ James A. Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 11-18; R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis, Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 3.

⁹ James A. Clifton, George L. Cornell and James M. McClurken, *People of the Three Fires, The Ottawa, Potawatomi and Ojibway of Michigan* (Grand Rapids: The Michigan Indian Press, 1986), v.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, xxii.

Michigan.¹¹ Other traditional stories tell of a great migration from the east some five hundred to a thousand years ago. Traveling with their “cousins,” the Ojibwe and Odawa, they made their way to what is now called the lower peninsula of Michigan.¹² Simon Pokagon, discussed at length in Chapter 3, wrote in 1901, that the Great Spirit had created Potawatomi man and woman, after a council with the other spirits.¹³ Pokagon explains the origins of totems as well in the same writing but does not place a location for this origin story. Scholars have most often placed the Potawatomi before contact with Europeans in what is now Canada, north of Lakes Superior and Huron, and trace their subsequent migrations south.¹⁴

¹¹ Michael Williams papers, two page typed document by Williams titled “The History of the Potawatomi.” I am indebted to the grandchildren of Michael Williams, Michaelann Daugherty Gartner, Christine Daugherty, Kevin Daugherty, and Frances Dostal in accessing the Michael Williams papers for this dissertation. Williams served as the Secretary and later the Chairperson of the Business Committee of the Tribe and was a plaintiff in the suit against the city of Chicago in 1914 discussed further in Chapter 5. He was a leader of the tribe from the beginning of the twentieth century until his death in 1969 and was a prolific writer and meticulous keeper of letters, records, ephemera, legal documents, etc. related to the tribe. Clifton accessed these papers for his research in James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683–1983, Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984). As Clifton noted in his work on the Pokagon Potawatomi “There is no single comprehensive archive of documents on the activities of the Potawatomi Business Committee and General Councils for this period. Instead, such materials are (in) the hands descendants of the nineteenth century committee members.” Ibid, 139, 147-148. The Williams grandchildren were most gracious in allowing me access to this archive, which is kept at the family home in Dowagiac, Michigan; the bulk of which filled nearly sixteen file cabinets and provided a wealth of information for this work.

¹² Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, v.

¹³ Simon Pokagon *Pottawattamie Book of Genesis, Legend of the Creation of Man* (Hartford, MI: C.H. Engle, 1900). Although several of Pokagon’s writings, specifically *The Red Man’s Greeting*, and *Queen of the Woods* are readily available to the public, this booklet is not, so the text is reproduced in Appendix 1.1. There is a possibility that *Pottawattamie Book of Genesis*, although generally assumed to be the work of Simon Pokagon, may actually be the work of his son Charles. My reasons for suggesting this is that the booklet was published in 1901, two years after Simon Pokagon’s death, the cover of the booklet identifies the author only as “Chief Pokagon,” and after his father’s death, Charles Pokagon was sometimes identified as a Chief. Even if authored by Charles, it reflects the passing on from father to son the tradition of transcribing Potawatomi stories to birch bark for the public.

¹⁴ James A. Clifton, *The Potawatomi* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), 16; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 3.

Life before Contact

The Potawatomi lived for thousands of years utilizing the resources around them and securing a balance in their use of the environment. They exchanged their knowledge in canoe building with neighboring tribes for the knowledge to grow corn, beans, and squash. They also grew peas, melons, and tobacco. Once in the Great Lakes region, the Potawatomi developed elaborate agricultural techniques.¹⁵ Food was dried and stored over winter, often in buried birch bark containers. Women and men supplemented their diets with berries and nuts (the latter were pounded into flour for bread). The making of maple syrup and gathering of wild rice was also an important activity for the community. Potawatomi homes were most commonly wigwams or tipis, covered in elm or birch bark or mats made of cattails laced together with fibers.¹⁶ The Potawatomi had the special advantage of having access to birch trees and the knowledge of how to build canoes from birch bark while also living in a relative mild climate that allowed for extensive farming. Few of their indigenous neighbors had this combination of transportation technology and opportunity for horticulture to the same degree.¹⁷ Farming and the ability to travel and trade over long distances in birch bark canoes, *wigwas jiman*, distinguished the Potawatomi from their Native neighbors and accounted for the vitality of their communities throughout the Great Lakes.¹⁸

¹⁵ Emerson F. Greenman, *The Indians of Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1961), 17; Bela Hubbard, *Ancient Garden Beds of Michigan*, 1878, reprinted in Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men, Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Great Lakes* (Amherst: UMass Press 2001).

¹⁶ Edmunds, 13-22.

¹⁷ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 40-41.

¹⁸ Clifton, *The Potawatomi*, 17-20.

Material Culture

Potawatomi wore animal skins, deerskin in the summer; and buffalo hide which was prized for its warmth in the winter. Breech clothes and moccasins were also made of deerskin. Women did the tanning of hides and wore dresses of skins. Clothing was decorated by dyeing different colors using roots and plants and embroidering designs onto the item of clothing with porcupine quills. Bird feathers were also frequently used. Hair was worn long and in braids by women and commonly in hair locks by men. Both sexes used paint from plants to decorate their faces and bodies and men tattooed themselves. After the arrival of Europeans, beginning in the 1600's, the Potawatomi would trade skins to the white trappers and traders that traveled through the area for beads, ribbon, and calico fabrics to add to their clothes. Beadwork became a way of decorating clothing, containers, etc. The Potawatomi became known for their appliqué and beadwork styles, consisting of common blocks of color, usually in simple geometric patterns or resembling a flower, tree, or animal. Many designs are passed down through families from generation to generation. Basket making from black ash, sweetgrass, and birch bark had utilitarian, social, and ceremonial uses. Pottery was hand coiled and fired. Before contact, the Potawatomi made their tools from material found around their villages. Bows, hoes and dishes were made from wood. Flint was chipped to make arrowheads and used to start fires for cooking and warmth. Needles and fishhooks were carved from animal bone. Stones were used for axes and to grind corn.¹⁹

Village Life

Villages were usually located on the high ground near rivers and streams. Single-family dwellings were most common. Larger rectangular multi-family lodges were

¹⁹ Ibid, 32-46.

popular during hot summer months. Homes were built to be durable, from easily obtained materials, and readily moveable when the need arose. One to two hundred people inhabited most villages. Each village had a civil chief, a *Wkema* or *Ogema*, who led by consensus. The community usually appointed war chiefs in times of threat to the village from outsiders. The status of women as life givers and culture bearers was well established and honored as was the man's responsibility to provide for and protect his family and village. Potawatomi communities were divided into clans. Clans or *dodems* were divisions within the village based upon descent from an original non-human ancestor, such as a bear, turtle, or sturgeon. The Potawatomi practiced clan exogamy (one had to marry outside of one's own clan). Clan membership established relationships and responsibilities among tribal members and neighbors.²⁰ The Potawatomi mixed freely with their neighbors and lived in intertribal communities.²¹ Village activities were tied to the seasons. Farm fields were tended during the spring and summer, harvesting, hunting and gathering occupied the fall. Fishing was a year round activity. Communities gathered during the warm months to socialize. During the winter, much time was spent making and repairing belongings, as well as storytelling. Like many other Native communities in North America, the Potawatomi were engaged in long-range trade for decorative and utilitarian items. Trade networks stretched from Hudson Bay in what is now Canada south to the interior of what is now Mexico.²²

²⁰ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 45-48.

²¹ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 3.

²² *Ibid*, 43-49; William Duncan Strong, *The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region, With Special Reference to the Illinois and the Potawatomi*, Leaflet 24 (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1926), 16-22.

The Contact Era

First contact between Europeans and the Potawatomi occurred in 1634 when a French trader named Jean Nicolet arrived at a place that is now called Red Bank, on the Door Peninsula of Wisconsin, along the western shore of Lake Michigan.²³ Michael Witgen outlines indigenous national identity (or the lack thereof) before contact and the ways in which Native peoples responded to European expectations to organize socially and politically into “nations.”²⁴ Relationships based upon affinity (clan, village, family, et.), reciprocity and obligation were being supplemented with ascribed political status to create new social relationships as a result of contact with the French. Witgen writes,

Algonquian bands that hunted in the western interior and traded at the French posts in the Lake Superior region were central to a new and evolving set of situational identities at the heart of this relationship between the French and their native allies. By the late seventeenth century these bands, when in the pays d'en haut, increasingly assumed identities as Ottawas and Sauteurs. Even as these “national” identities took shape, however, they remained flexible and even interchangeable.²⁵

The Potawatomi became entangled in the fur trade, which eventually resulted in over-hunting and trapping; more immediately escalated armed conflict - over territory and trading rights - with other Indian peoples and Europeans; and led to an unending assault upon traditional Potawatomi culture and lifeways. During the course of the early fur trade, kinship relationships and intermarriage helped to foster cultural and political connections in which neither party dominated the other. The French learned the Potawatomi language and traded according to Native customs. Competing for depleting beaver pelts and other resources resulted in warfare between the Potawatomi and the

²³ Clifton, *The Prairie People*, 35; Clifton, *The Potawatomi*, 20-21.

²⁴ Michael Witgen, “The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America,” *Ethnohistory* vol. 54 no.4 (2007): 639-668.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Iroquois and other eastern tribes (the Beaver Wars – 1641). Ultimately, most of the Great Lakes tribes, including the Potawatomi, were forced by the Iroquois to take refuge on the peninsula now known as Door County, Wisconsin. The Potawatomi fought to retake their traditional homelands back from the Iroquois beginning in 1653. By 1679, they had expanded throughout the Great Lakes region from what is now Green Bay to Detroit, and they retained these lands until land cession treaties with the United States during the 19th Century.²⁶

Unfortunately, for the Potawatomi and other Indians, the French and British conducted their warfare against each other in North America.²⁷ The Potawatomi, like most Native peoples living east of the Mississippi at the time, were drawn into the many imperial conflicts that culminated in the “French and Indian War” (1754 – 1763). Many Potawatomi allied themselves with the French during the conflict. When the British ultimately won the war, the Potawatomi and other Indian allies of the French were abandoned at the Treaty of Paris (1763). Subsequently, the Potawatomi would have to deal with the British on their own.

After the French departed from the Great Lakes region, the British asserted themselves by terminating the previous kinship relationships established by the French and trading on European terms with an emphasis on maximizing profits. As a result, over-hunting and trapping continued to increase and the Indians of the Great Lakes became increasingly dependent upon trade goods. The traditional social and cultural

²⁶ Ibid; Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 15-28.

²⁷ Edmunds, 3-58.

fabric of Potawatomi communities was substantially altered as disease, death and impoverishment took their toll.²⁸

Movements led by Native prophets, such as the Delaware Prophet Neolin, inspired Indians throughout the Great Lakes to resist the intrusions of the British and American colonists. The Odawa leader Pontiac led an armed resistance in which many Potawatomi joined, in 1763 – 1764. Although Pontiac and his resistance movement were nearly successful in driving the British from the Great Lakes, they could not overcome the overwhelming numbers of the British, and the war ended in something of a stalemate.²⁹ As relations with the British deteriorated, the British Crown issued a proclamation in 1763 that established a line along the Appalachian Mountains to separate Natives from non-Natives. For a short time, the Potawatomi and other tribes of the Great Lakes would continue to control their traditional homelands.

During the Revolutionary War, most Potawatomi either sided with the British or remained neutral because of their suspicions of the colonists' desires for their land. Ever-increasing demands by settlers for land and resources conflicted with the Potawatomi desires to retain their ancestral homelands. The situation did not improve for the Potawatomi after the United States secured its independence from Great Britain. In fact it worsened, as the Americans continued to expand their activities west of the Appalachians and sought the land of the Native peoples rather than only furs or other resources. In 1787, Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance that made clear the intent of the United States to take control of the Great Lakes region. Enacted by the Continental Congress in 1787, the Northwest Ordinance was said to guarantee peace and fair dealing with the

²⁸ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 49-51.

²⁹ For a sophisticated work on Pontiac and his war of resistance see Gregory E. Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Indian tribes in the Midwest. However, the law also established a process for turning the Great Lakes region into six new states to be added to the Union. The intent to settle the Great Lakes and take it from its Native inhabitants was clear. The law designated the land bounded by the Ohio River, Mississippi River, the Great Lakes, and Pennsylvania as the Northwest Territory. Eventually, the territory would be organized into six states: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The Northwest Ordinance established the basis for United States expansion into the region. This legislation promised,

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed.³⁰

Native resistance in the Great Lakes region continued. At the Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794) a confederacy of Indians, including some Potawatomi, organized by the leaders Blue Jacket (Shawnee), and *Mishikinakwa* (Little Turtle - Miami) was defeated near Maumee, Ohio. The next year the Potawatomi and the other tribes of the Great Lakes would try to insure peace with the United States by signing the Treaty of Greenville (1795).³¹ In that Treaty, much of what is now Ohio was ceded to the United States and American forts were established throughout the region, including at Chicago and Detroit. The signing of the Treaty in 1795 established a temporary peace between the United States and the American Indian tribes that lived in the territory but encouraged non-Native immigration to the area.³² Once again, promises were made to the Native signers of the Treaty that they would be treated fairly in future land dealings. Article Five of the Treaty of Greenville provided that

³⁰ <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=8&page=transcript> (accessed February 3, 2011).

³¹ Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 29-42.

³² Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 55-58.

The Indian tribes who have a right to those lands, are quietly to enjoy them, hunting, planting, and dwelling thereon so long as they please, without any molestation from the United States; but when those tribes, or any of them, shall be disposed to sell their lands, or any part of them, they are to be sold only to the United States; and until such sale, the United States will protect all the said Indian tribes in the quiet enjoyment of their lands against all citizens of the United States, and against all other white persons who intrude upon the same.³³

Pressures to relinquish more lands to the United States continued and Indian anger over the constant demands for land mounted as the fur trade came to an end. Dependency on trade goods, the impact of disease, alcohol and non-Native technology, all contributed to Native frustrations and fears. After 1805, another prophetic movement of resistance swept through the Great Lakes. The Shawnee Prophet, Tenskwatawa, and his brother, Tecumseh, promoted a vision of a unified Indian resistance to colonization and conquest by the Americans. The Shawnee Prophet established the intertribal village of Prophetstown, near what is now Battle Ground, Indiana. Tecumseh traveled from Canada to the Gulf Coast attempting to secure an Indian confederacy strong enough to resist the United States. A number of Potawatomi, including some from the St. Joseph River Valley, joined in the movement. The Shawnee Prophet and Tecumseh's vision of a unified resistance was ended when the Americans, under the leadership of future President William Henry Harrison, attacked and destroyed Prophetstown at the Battle of Tippecanoe.³⁴ Shortly afterwards, war broke out between the United States and Britain. Many of the Great Lakes tribes, including many Potawatomi, sided with the British during the War of 1812. In October of 1813, Tecumseh was killed in the Battle of the

³³ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs and Treaties, Vol. II, Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904). <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/wya0039.htm> (accessed February 3, 2011).

³⁴ See Gregory E. Dowd's analysis of prophetic movements and resistance during this era in Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

Thames, marking the end of significant armed resistance by the Potawatomi and the other tribes of the region.³⁵ During the War of 1812, General William Hull ordered the evacuation of Fort Dearborn at present day Chicago, in August of 1812. Captain Nathan Heald oversaw the evacuation, but on August 15, the evacuees were attacked by about five hundred Potawatomi Indians in the Battle of Fort Dearborn. The Potawatomi burned the fort to the ground the next day.³⁶

The Potawatomi, like other Great Lakes tribes, signed many treaties which “sold” their lands to the United States – usually at a fraction of the lands’ true value. American negotiators frequently employed underhanded tactics to secure the signatures need. In 1825, the Erie Canal was completed, encouraging a flood of non-Native emigration into the Great Lakes region. Potawatomi leaders sought to balance the United States’ desire for land with their followers’ needs for trade items and good relations with the settlers. Between 1816 and 1833, the Potawatomi in Michigan were parties to over thirty land cession treaties.³⁷ In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, a law intended to force all the Indian tribes living east of the Mississippi River to reservations west of the Mississippi. In 1833, the United States government called together all of the Potawatomi tribes of the area to a final treaty negotiation at Chicago. Potawatomi community leaders from villages throughout the Midwest, including Leopold Pokagon, attended with trepidation.³⁸

³⁵ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 57-58.

³⁶ Ibid, 53- 58; Milo M. Quaife, *Checagou From Indian Wigwam to Modern City 1673-1835* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1933).

³⁷ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 58.

³⁸ Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 29-52.

The Emergence of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Leopold Pokagon (1775? – 1841) was a Potawatomi *Wkema/Ogema* (Chief) in the first half of the 19th century. Taking over for his father-in-law Topinabee, who died in 1826, Pokagon became the head of a Potawatomi village in the Saint Joseph River Valley in southwest Michigan. His early life is surrounded by legend, and many details are known only from the oral histories of the tribe. Stories suggest that he was born an Odawa or Ojibwe, but raised from a young age by the Potawatomi. His name, Pokagon, means "The Rib" in the Potawatomi language, an appellation he earned, some say, because he was wearing a human rib in his scalp lock when first taken into the tribe. In 1833, by abstaining from alcohol at the treaty negotiations held in Chicago, and emphasizing the conversion of himself and his followers to Catholicism, Leopold Pokagon was able to negotiate an amendment to the Treaty of Chicago that allowed Pokagon's Band to remain in Michigan. In contrast, almost all the rest of the Potawatomi were slated for removal west of the Mississippi River by the federal government - as a part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Pokagon ultimately used the monies paid pursuant to this Treaty and another to purchase lands for his people in Silver Creek Township, near Dowagiac, Michigan.³⁹

In the last years of his life, Leopold Pokagon sought to protect and promote the unique position of the Potawatomi communities living in the St. Joseph River Valley. He traveled to Detroit in July 1830 where he visited Father Gabriel Richard to request the

³⁹ Ibid, 53-76. In 2006, an entire issue of the *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* was devoted to the Removal Era of the Potawatomi. Articles include Mark R. Schurr, "Untangling Removal Period Archaeology: The Complexity of Potawatomi Sites"; W. Ben Secunda, "To Cede or Seed? Risk and Identity Among the Woodland Potawatomi During the Removal Period"; Elizabeth Bollwerk, "Controlling Acculturation: A Potawatomi Strategy for Avoiding Removal"; Mark R. Schurr, Terrance J. Martin, and W. Ben Secunda, "How the Pokagon Band Avoided Removal: Archaeological Evidence from the Faunal Assemblage of the Pokagon Village Site (20BE13). *MCA* vol. 31, no. 1 (Spring 2006).

services of a priest. Affiliation with the Catholic Church was not only for religious reasons but also represented an important political alliance in the struggle to avoid removal. That same year, Pokagon was baptized by the Vicar general of the Detroit Diocese, Father Frederick Rese. Also in that year, Pokagon, together with three other chiefs, wrote to President Andrew Jackson requesting government support for the provision of a priest for the tribe.⁴⁰ In August of 1830, Father Stephen Badin arrived to establish a mission to serve the Pokagon Potawatomi. By establishing this affiliation with the Catholic Church, the Potawatomi of the St. Joseph River Valley promoted a new identity as the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.⁴¹ Catholic Potawatomi, and those willing to convert throughout southwest Michigan and northwest Indiana, acknowledged Leopold Pokagon as the leader of the Catholic Potawatomi. Ever since, villages from Hartford, Rush Lake, Dowagiac, Niles, Buchanan, South Bend, and elsewhere have been united in a common identity, the *Pokegnek Bodewadmik*.⁴²

After the 1833 Treaty negotiations in Chicago, other Bands of Potawatomi returned to their homes in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, or fled to Canada. Those who remained in Indiana and Illinois were moved west in a series of removals ending in 1838, in what has come to be called the “Trail of Death.” In 1841, Leopold Pokagon had to obtain the assistance of Associate Michigan Supreme Court Justice

⁴⁰ In the *Petition to President Andrew Jackson from four chiefs of the Pokagon Potawatomi along the St. Joseph River*, the chiefs protest the takeover of the local mission site by the Federal Indian agent and request that the President/ allow the black robes “to occupy the mission and instruct the Potawatomi and their children in the worship of the Great Spirit.” The petition was signed (marked) by Pagagan (presumably Leopold Pokagon), Wapanto, Noakota and Sanguinai. “Petition to President Andrew Jackson from four chiefs of the Pokagon Potawatomi along the St. Joseph River,” in *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung im Kaiserthum Oesterreich*, vo. 9 (Vienna, 1836).

⁴¹ The Pokagon Band has also been known since this time as the Catholic Potawatomi of Indiana and Michigan.

⁴² James A. Clifton, “Chicago Was Theirs,” *Chicago History* vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring, 1970): 4-17; Clifton, “Chicago, September 14, 1833, The Last Great Indian Treaty in the Old Northwest,” *Chicago History* vol. 9, no. 2 (Summer, 1980): 86-97; Clifton, “Leopold Pokagon: Transformative Leadership on the St. Joseph River Frontier,” *Michigan History* vol. 69, no. 5, (September/October 1985): 16-23.

Epaphroditus Ransom to halt military attempts to remove the Catholic Potawatomi in violation of the 1833 Treaty. After Pokagon's death on July 8, 1841, disputes between his heirs, the community, and the Catholic Church over ownership of the Silver Creek lands resulted in legal battles that painfully disrupted the community. A majority of the residents living at Silver Creek moved to Brush Creek, Rush Lake, and elsewhere in southwest Michigan and northwest Indiana. The community thereafter turned its focus to securing the annuities and other promises owed them under the terms of the many treaties they had signed with the United States.⁴³

Simon Pokagon (1830? - January 28, 1899), a son of Leopold Pokagon, was a leader of the community that bears his father's name, an early Indian author of numerous articles and one novel, and a popular speaker during his time. Evidence of his popularity is reflected in the number of his works that were included in the auction of the Daniel F. Appleton library in New York City in 1922 (see Appendix 1.2) but the city that most felt his presence was Chicago. As is discussed in Chapter 3, he was an early Indian celebrity and widely praised for his rhetorical skills.

Two censuses of tribal members were taken by U.S. government officials in 1895-96 to determine eligibility for treaty annuity payments. Called the "Cadman-Shelby Roll" after the federal officials who tallied the census, it has since been used by the tribe for establishing enrollment and citizenship. In 1896, partial payments were made to the Pokagon Potawatomi for monies owed pursuant to the land cession treaties of the first half of the 19th century. At the turn of that century, the Pokagon Potawatomi also began petitioning for return of lands along the Chicago lakefront. Discussed at length in

⁴³ Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 90.

Chapters 3 and 4, the claim eventually landed in the United States Supreme Court in 1917.⁴⁴

In the 1930s, the Band petitioned for participation in federal programs under the Indian Reorganization Act, (1934) but fell victim to the Department of Interior's decision not to extend the IRA's services into much of Lower Michigan, largely due to a lack of personnel and funds.⁴⁵ For the next sixty years, the Pokagon Potawatomi sought to reestablish recognition by the federal government. The Band, particularly under the leadership of Tribal Chair Michael Williams, also proceeded with actions in the Court of Claims for payment of monies still due under the numerous treaties between the tribe and the United States.⁴⁶ That effort successfully culminated in payment of monies to tribal members in 1983. Reflecting the tribal leadership's interest in national affairs, Michael Williams and John R. "Dick" Winchester were delegates to the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, and Winchester was a delegate to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)⁴⁷

In 1981, the Pokagon Band again filed a petition for federal acknowledgement with the Secretary of the Interior. Over the next decade, the petition met with continual bureaucratic complications in the Bureau of Indian Affairs - Branch of Acknowledgement and Research. These delays eventually led the Band to abandon the administrative process for federal recognition. The Pokagon Band finally had its federal

⁴⁴ Ibid, 112 – 115; James A. Clifton, "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar: Potawatomi Claims to Chicago's Lakefront," *Michigan History* vol. 71, no. 5 (September-October 1987): 12-17.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 120-121.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 126-131.

⁴⁷ "Michigan Delegate," *Dowagiac Daily News*. June 13, 1961, 3. Williams also corresponded directly with Sol Tax, Professor at the University and facilitator of the conference, regarding the tribe. Letter dated June 4, 1961. Michael Williams papers.

tribal status restored by the passage of the Pokagon Restoration Act, a congressional act signed into law by President William Clinton on September 21, 1994.

Today, the Pokagon Band is using its reaffirmed sovereignty to reestablish a land base, develop its government and tribal services, and to strengthen the tribal community. The Band's headquarters is in Dowagiac, Michigan and includes Tribal Council Offices, a Tribal Court, and the Administration and Finance Departments, as well as tribal service programs for Health, Social Services, Housing, and Education. Head Start, language and traditions classes, elders' services and luncheons, commodity distribution, employment training and placement, college scholarships, and youth summer camps are also representative of the services the Band provides to its citizens. The Band maintains a satellite service office in Mishawaka, Indiana as well. Federal recognition has also meant access to government grant and loan programs, as well as the protections and opportunities afforded to Indians generally, such as those provided by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA).⁴⁸

The Pokagon Band recently completed *Kekyajek Odanek*, a seventeen unit elder housing project in Dowagiac for which it won an innovative housing award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Band intends to develop additional family housing at the site, as well in the Hartford, Michigan, and Mishawaka areas. The tribe has also purchased property in St. Joseph and La Porte Counties, Indiana, and has enrolled 1200 of these acres with the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service in the

⁴⁸ From the tribal website at www.pokagon.com (accessed February 5, 2011).

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). This project will restore much of the wetland habitat at this site, which is part of the ancestral Grand Kankakee Marsh.⁴⁹

The Pokagon Band's present eleven member elected Tribal Council is the modern form of the traditional group-based governance. The tribe that bears Leopold Pokagon's name continues as the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, a federally recognized Indian Nation, with over 3400 citizens and a ten county service area in northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan. Its Indiana service area abuts the city limits of Chicago. Traditional iconography remains important to tribal members as evidenced by the National Seal of the Pokagon Nation. First unveiled in the 1970's, it depicts the story of how fire was brought to the Nésnabek. Fire is understood to be a gift to the people, brought by the hawk as a piece of the sun. This is particularly important to the Potawatomi since it refers to the role the Potawatomi play as keepers of the fire in the Three Fires Confederacy with the Odawa and Ojibwe. The drawing is centered within a round border, symbolizing the centering of all life within the four directions of Mother Earth.⁵⁰

The Pokagon Band continues efforts to preserve *Bodewadmimwen*, their native language. In 2003, the Band initiated a cooperative language effort with neighboring Potawatomi, the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, and the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi. The project has generated classes in all three tribal communities, as well as developed curriculum and language preservation materials. The Band has recently completed construction of a multi-million dollar administration building in Dowagiac and has commenced construction of a Cultural Center as well. The

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ <http://www.pokagon.com/education/docs/flaglogohistory.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2011).

tribe maintains a website at www.pokagon.com, and publishes a monthly newsletter.⁵¹ Pow wows are held throughout the year, the largest being the Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa celebration held every labor day weekend. Each year the tribe participates in an annual gathering of the dispersed bands of Potawatomi, including the Prairie Band in Kansas, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Oklahoma, the Forest County Potawatomi Community in Wisconsin, the Hannahville Indian Community in northern Michigan, Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band in Michigan, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, also in Michigan, and the Walpole Island First Nation and Wasauksing First Nation, both located in Canada.

The Pokagon Potawatomi operate Four Winds Casino Resort (a \$160 million gaming facility in New Buffalo, MI that opened in August, 2007)⁵² just sixty miles from the Chicago city limits, and is opening a second casino in 2011 within its ancestral lands at Hartford, Michigan.⁵³ There is an active ceremonial and cultural events calendar, in which some members participate,⁵⁴ and more than a dozen tribal citizens participate in an artists' collective supported by the Tribe. Black Ash basketry continues to be a significant artist endeavor. For instance, Julia Wesaw of Hartford, Michigan learned traditional black ash basket making from her Grandmother and mother. In the 1970's Wesaw was one of the co-founders of the Pokagon Basket Makers' Exchange/Co-Op, which revived the art

⁵¹ The newsletter, *Pokégnek Yajdanawa* (The Pokagon Tell it) is available from the tribe by contacting the Band at newsletter@PokagonBand-nsn.gov.

⁵² James Pritchard, "New Buffalo Casino Boosts Tourism," *Detroit Free Press*, June 28, 2008, <http://www.freep.com/article/20080629/FEATURES07/806290502/0/MULTI/New-Bufferalo-casino-boosts-tourism?odyssey=nav|head> (accessed February 5, 2011). Four Winds Casino Resort maintains a website at <http://www.fourwindscasino.com/>.

⁵³ From the tribal website at www.pokagon.com (accessed February 5, 2011). As a tribal member and attorney, I have served as the Pokagon Potawatomi tribal attorney, a tribal council member, was a member of the committee that negotiated the gaming compact with the State of Michigan, I am a co-author of the tribal constitution, and I continue to serve on the Traditions and Repatriation Committee of the tribe.

⁵⁴ For instance, in the January, 2011 issue of *Pokégnek Yajdanawa*, The Pokagon Band's Department of Language and Culture sponsored a "Storytelling and Traditional Snow Snake Games" led by John Pigeon. *Pokégnek Yajdanawa*, January, 2011, 12.

of basket, making in the Pokagon Potawatomi Community. In 1989, she was a recipient of a Michigan Heritage Award from the Museum at Michigan State University.⁵⁵ John Pigeon, a tribal member from Dorr, Michigan, received the same award for his black ash basketry in 2010.⁵⁶ In a 2002 interview while exhibiting at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Pigeon explained the motivations behind his work.

The reason I do a lot of the traditional arts is to keep them alive," Pigeon said. "As Anishinabe people, we try to always think of seven generations. Those seven generations include my grandfather's grandfather all the way to my grandchildren's grandchildren. By making baskets or keeping rituals and ceremonies alive, we're able to give something to our grandchildren's grandchildren."⁵⁷

This interest in tradition and maintaining a distinct Potawatomi identity weaves throughout the course of tribal history. In the following chapters, I will explore how these desires worked in Chicago as the Pokagon Potawatomi wrestled with efforts to assimilate or marginalize them.

⁵⁵ http://museum.msu.edu/s-program/mh_awards/awards/1989jw.html (accessed February 5, 2011).

⁵⁶ <http://museum.msu.edu/WhatsNew/News/?month=57> (accessed February 6, 2011).

⁵⁷ http://www.turtletrack.org/Issues02/Co06152002/CO_06152002_Mihtohseenionki.htm (accessed February 6, 2011).

Chapter 2

Orientation: Topics, Themes, and Literature

For the last several decades, scholars have been intrigued with the ways that some American Indians resisted assimilation into the mainstream of the dominant culture of the United States. My work examines how some Indians found ways to retain a distinct “American Indian” identity, suggests that resistance, more than a mere rejection of assimilation, could, without forfeiting “Indianess,” express a desire for inclusion into the larger contemporary society. The goals of that resistance were varied, as were the ways in which it manifested itself, and the strategies deployed. My focus in this dissertation is on the Pokagon Potawatomi and Chicago. The following reflects the trends in scholarship on these issues in a thematic review of the literature that this dissertation particularly engages.

Simon Pokagon and His Relation to Other 19th Century American Indian Writers

Prior to the movement of contemporary native Indian writers known as the Native American Renaissance, there were very few American Indian authors.⁵⁸ They include

⁵⁸ Paula Gunn Allen, ed., *Voice of the Turtle, American Indian Literature 1900- 1970* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994); Cheryl L. Walker, *Indian Nation, Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Robert Dale Parker, *The Invention of Native American Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, “Simon Pokagon, Ogi-maw-kwe Mit-I-Gwa Ki, Queen of the Woods,” *American Literary Realism* 13 (1980): 317-319; Ruoff, “American Indian Authors, 1774-1899,” in ed. Andrew Wiget, *Critical Essays on Native American Literature* (Boston: Twayne, 1985, 1991); Ruoff, “Simon Pokagon, (1830 – January 1899)” in *Dictionary of Native American Literature*, ed. Andrew Wiget, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, vol. 1815 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994), 277-279; Bernd C. Peyer, *American Indian Nonfiction: An Anthology of Writings, 1760s-1930s* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007); Peyer, *The Thinking Indian, Native American Writers, 1850’s-1920’s*

Andrew J. Blackbird, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, John Rollin Ridge, Pauline Johnson, John Milton Oskison, William Apess, William Warren, and Simon Pokagon among others. These 19th century writers were significant in telling the story of the invasion and colonization of the Native American tribes and the usurping of their lands by the Europeans from their own perspective.⁵⁹ Among these early Indian writers, Simon Pokagon remains an important contributor.⁶⁰ Principal biographers of Simon Pokagon have been Cecelia Buechner, Everett Claspy, and James A. Clifton.⁶¹ However, a Pokagon tribal member has published no work about Simon Pokagon, nor has there been a focus on Simon's Pokagon's influence on Chicago; this dissertation fills the gaps in that literature.⁶²

The Development of Cultural Geography and Critical Landscape Studies

In order to explore whether the Pokagon Potawatomi Indians have been able to maintain their socio-cultural orientation as a unique community in North America generally, and to maintain a presence in Chicago, specifically, cultural geography offers a portal for understanding. Cultural geography is an appendage of two main branches of geography (cultural and physical). Cultural geography refers to the systematic study of the numerous cultural features found around the world. It also includes studying the orientation of peoples' relations to the places and spaces of their origin, movement, and

(Frankfort: Peter Lang, 2007); Robert Dale Parker, *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

⁵⁹ Peyer, *American Indian Nonfiction*, 240.

⁶⁰ Ruoff, "Simon Pokagon, Ogi-maw-kwe Mit-I-Gwa Ki, Queen of the Woods," 318.

⁶¹ Cecilia Bain Buechner, "The Pokagons," *Indiana Historical Soc. Publications* vol. 10, no. 5 (1933): 327; Everett Claspy, *The Potawatomi Indians of Southwestern Michigan* (Dowagiac, MI: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1966); James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983, Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); James A. Clifton, "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar: Potawatomi Claims to Chicago's Lakefront," *Michigan History* 71.5 (1987): 12-17.

⁶² An early draft of parts of Chapters 2 and 3 appeared in an essay of the forthcoming reprint of Simon Pokagon's *Ogimawkwe Mitigwaki: Queen of the Woods*, foreword by Philip J. Deloria and essays by John N. Low, Margaret Noori, and Kiara M. Vigil (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011).

migration.⁶³ A number of significant cultural phenomena examined in the field of cultural geography encompass language, art, various economic and governmental frameworks, religion, music, and other cultural features that provide explanations for the means and reasons for the functioning of a particular group of people in the ways and in the areas in which they reside.⁶⁴

Furthermore, in parallel to cultural geography, cultural landscapes are also significant because they relate or connect culture to the physical settings in which people are situated. This is because environment can either impede or foster the development of numerous and distinct cultural attributes. For example, people residing within a particular rural area may have more cultural ties to the natural environment in which they live in comparison to those residing in a large metropolitan region. This is much of the emphasis of the "Human-Land Tradition" within the Four Traditions of geography, which assesses the impact of humans on their environment, the effect of nature on humankind, and the perceptions of people concerning their environments.⁶⁵

Cultural geography is an academic field of study founded by Carl Sauer while at the University of California, Berkeley. Sauer made use of landscapes as the central component of geographic inquiry and posited that cultures both emerge because of the landscape and assist in developing the landscape. Contemporary cultural geography tends towards more qualitative research in contrast to being quantitative – the usual approach to

⁶³ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place, The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 5.

⁶⁴ Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," *University of California Publications in Geography* vol. 2 (1925): 19.

⁶⁵ Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov, Mona Domosh and Lester Rowntree, *The human mosaic: a thematic introduction to cultural geography* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994), 136.

physical geography.⁶⁶ Cultural geography is undergoing continuing articulations and revisions; with more defined fields developing within it, such as children's geography, political geography, feminist geography, urban geography, tourism studies, and the geography of sexuality and space. It has progressed to further the study of human activities and cultural practices as they spatially relate to the world.⁶⁷ A significant number of writings in contemporary cultural geography and critical landscape theories have been published over the last thirty years.⁶⁸ This dissertation focusing on Native cultural geography explores indigenous understandings of “land” and homeland.

Da – To live in a place (Potawatomi)
Chicago édayan – I live in Chicago
Chicago édat o – He/she lives in Chicago
Ni pi je édayen? – Where do you live?

Many Native American Indian peoples of North America hold an intrinsic attachment to their homelands. This might explain, in part, the reluctance of Native peoples to relinquish their traditional lands to the United States government during the

⁶⁶ J.B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and Power,” in ed. D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscapes: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments* (New York: Cambridge, 1989), 277.

⁶⁷ Donald Mitchell, *Cultural Geography, A Critical Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

⁶⁸ Pierce Lewis, “Learning and Looking: Geographical and Other Writings About the American Cultural Landscape,” *American Quarterly* 35 (1983): 242-261; Kay Anderson, “The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, (1987):580-598; David Turnbull, *Maps Are Territories, Science Is An Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); J.B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and Power,” 277-312; Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Trevor Barnes and James Duncan, ed. *Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscapes* (London: Routledge, 1992),1-17; Epeli Hau`ofa, *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, ed. Eric Waddell. Vijay Naidu and Epeli Hau`ofa (Fiji: School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific in Association with Beake House, 1993); Nicholas K. Bromley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994); Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places, Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), Chapter 9, “The Social Construction of Space and Time” and Chapter 11, “From Space to Place and Back Again”; Gerald W. Adelman, “Reworking the Landscape, Chicago Style,” *The Hastings Center Report* vol. 28, no. 6, (Nov.-Dec., 1998): S6-S11; Yi-Fu Tuan, foreword in *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic, From Britain’s Renaissance to America’s New World* by Kenneth Robert Olwig (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), xvii-xviii; Robert Sack, *A Geographical Guide to the Real and the Good* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Chris Wilson and Paul Groth, ed. *Everyday American, Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

treaty-making era. Indians often consider the lands, or at least particular sites in the landscape, to be sacred, and traditionally most Indian peoples defined geography, or least place, via myth, story and oral history. They perceived their ancestral lands as carrying the lifeblood of Native traditions.⁶⁹

When the United States consolidated power over Indians and their lands in the nineteenth century, its agents instituted a new alien policy of breaking up Indian lands for commercial agriculture and other economic development. Policy-makers in the 19th century concluded that breaking up Indian landholdings into parcels of private property would serve to civilize the “savage” Natives.⁷⁰ Most Woodland and many Prairie Indians had been planting crops for centuries, but on often communally owned lands because they most often considered their homelands as living networks, not as fragments that could be individually owned. It is hard to overestimate the importance of Indians’ relationship to their land, or their lands importance to their relationships; sacred, interpersonal, diplomatic, and environmental.⁷¹

Juliana Barr notes the commonality of American Indian understandings of space as homeland – “landscape as both a cultural and moral space – a place where mythical beings, ancestral spirits, daily life, and geopolitical concerns coexisted and interplayed.”⁷² Indian control of their territories was reflected by the fact that before the

⁶⁹ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 28; Basso, Introduction.

⁷⁰ Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 28.

⁷¹ Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 69.

⁷² Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 68, no. 1 (January 2011): 5-46. See also Philip J. Deloria, “From Nation to Neighborhood: Land, Policy, Culture, Colonialism, and Empire in U.S.-Indian Relations,” in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, ed. James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O’Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 353. For twentieth-century Indian responses to the

arrival of Europeans, North America was a political and economic landscape already ‘mapped’ and ‘surveyed,’ albeit in indigenous terms, with well-known national and imperial boundary lines among Indian powers. It remained so long after European arrival, in regions where Indians were manifestly dominating American space.⁷³ Kathleen DuVal calls for recognition of Indian borders, arguing that “Contrary to assumptions that only Europeans drew borders, Indians across the continent defined, defended, and disputed geographic and metaphoric borders long before Europeans arrived.⁷⁴ Scholars have more recently recognized that North America was a vast series of Indian domains prior to contact. “The fluid categories of familial, cultural, and linguistic affinity by which Indians configured their polities are by no means at odds with structural integrity and clear geographical domain.”⁷⁵ As Cecelia Sheridan points out, contemporary maps cannot replace Native perceptions of the landscape to illuminate Native understandings of

political applications of cartography see Peter Nabokov, “Orientations from Their Side: Dimensions of Native American Cartographic Discourse,” in *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use*, ed. G. Malcolm Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 241-69.

⁷³ Claudio Saunt, “‘Our Indians’: European Empires and the History of the Native American South,” in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 61. See also Colin G. Calloway who makes a similar argument, pointing out that North America is “not a canvas for a single national narrative; it is a series of Indian homelands. It may also witness ‘a series of frontiers, zones of interaction,’” but they “formed, overlapped, and re-formed around those homelands.” Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 2.

⁷⁴ Kathleen DuVal, 28. See also Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Deloria, “From Nation to Neighborhood,” 359. For a discussion of meanings of territoriality see W.D. Mignolo, “Colonial Situations, Geographical Discourses, and Territorial Representations: Toward a Diatopical Understanding of Colonial Semiosis,” *Dispositio* 14 (1989): 124-128.

⁷⁵ Patricia Albers and Jeanne Kay, “Sharing the Land: A Study in American Indian Territoriality,” in *A Cultural Geography of North American Indians*, ed. Thomas E. Ross and Tyrel G. Moore (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 47-91: 50. See also Peter J. Usher, Frank J. Tough, and Robert M. Galois, “Reclaiming the Land: Aboriginal Title, Treaty Rights and Land Claims in Canada,” *Applied Geography* 12 (1992): 112. For a discussion of the defense of social and economic boundaries see Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4-8 and James Taylor Carson, “Ethnogeography and the Native American Past,” *Ethnohistory* 49 (Fall 2002): 783.

territory. “We cannot seek to recognize and read native borders and boundaries by redrawing a map of North America with a different set of lines upon it.”⁷⁶

Territory was also defined by use and need.⁷⁷ According to Barr, territory was characterized by fluidity. Homeland was measured by distance and borders were carefully guarded. Stored memories and instructions were the indigenous equivalent, in many ways, to European maps.⁷⁸ Furthermore, in many ways maps were not necessary in the pre-contact world of Indians. Maps are, after all, not only documents for claims making, but also navigational tools and Indians had alternatives to maps of their borders and territories. Richard Bradley argues that the study of rock art’s images and motifs often obscures the significance of the *location* of pictographs; moreover, such markers often served to signal territory to both community members and outsiders. In addition, stories also served as boundaries and trees often marked domain.⁷⁹ Residence and experience often were the basis for pre-contact claims to the land,

⁷⁶ Cecilia Sheridan, “Social Control and Native Territoriality in Northeastern New Spain,” in *Choice, Persuasion, and Coercion: Social Control on Spain’s North American Frontiers*, ed. Jesús F. de la Teja and Ross Frank, trans. Ned F. Brierley (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 123; Imre Sutton, “Cartographic Review of Indian Land Tenure and Territoriality: A Schematic Approach,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 26 (2002): 69.

⁷⁷ “Place and seasonality (space and time) outlined a yearly resource map” that stretches and contracted like a rubber band to accommodate times of dispersion and concentration of groups.” Sheridan, 126. For “imagined maps” see Maria F. Wade, *The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau, 1582-1799* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 56.

⁷⁸ Barr, 9-19.

⁷⁹ Richard Bradley, *An Archaeology of Natural Places* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 38-39, 69; Harry J. Shafer, “Art and Territoriality in the Lower Pecos Archaic,” *Plains Anthropologist* 22, no. 75 (February 1977): 16; See also Mark Warhus, *Another America: Native American Maps and the History of Our Land* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 19-22, for a discussion of a connection between petroglyphs and Indian mapping. See also David J. Wishart, “The Dispossession of the Pawnee,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (September 1979):383; Bénard de la Harpe, “Account of the Journey of Bénard de la Harpe: Discovery Made by Him of Several Nations Situated in the West,” trans. Ralph A. Smith, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 62 (October 1958): 253 and Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1992), 147. For Indian mapping and map-making see Louis De Vorsey, Jr., “Silent Witnesses: Native American Maps,” *The Georgia Review* 46 (Winter 1992): 709-26; Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Renée Fossett, “Mapping Inuktitut: Inuit Views of the Real World,” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth

High points and low points on the landscape inscribed Indian sovereignty with both physical and metaphysical boundaries simultaneously. Topographical extremes...were points where everyday experience intersects with the supernatural plane.⁸⁰

The connection between people and territory lay in the deep and detailed knowledge of the environment and found expression through the naming of, charted movement through, and residence in that land. Landmarks and geographic knowledge often survives in Euro-American maps.⁸¹ As Keith Basso notes,

...(the idea of place is) as old perhaps as the idea of home, of 'our territory' as opposed to 'their territory,' of entire regions and local landscapes where groups of men and women have invested themselves (their thoughts, their values, their collective sensibilities) and to which they feel they belong.⁸²

Vibert (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1996), 74-94; John C. Ewers, "The Making and Uses of Maps by Plains Indian Warriors," in *Plains Indian History and Culture: Essays on Continuity and Change* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 180-90; G. Malcolm Lewis, *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and Gustavo Verdesio, "Forgotten Territorialities: The Materiality of Indigenous Pasts," *Nephantla: View from the South* 2 (2001): 85-114.

⁸⁰ Barr, 33. Craig Howe adds, "The social dimension of tribalism relates land and identity to the concept of 'peoplehood,' a unique community identity differentiated from other tribes and from individual persons. The relationship between a specific people and a particular landscape is not a relationship between an individual and the land or between 'Indians' and the land. Instead, it is a relationship between a distinct community and their remembered landscape, it is a relationship often encoded in stories about a particular past events that their ancestors experienced ... Event-centered tribal histories are based on the idea that 'identity is a conception of and feelings about events which a people have lived. 'It is the meaning of events in which one's ancestors took part, in ways that make one proud, which differentiate people into ethnic groups.' (citation omitted) ... tribal histories are community-based and tribally specific. Therefore, tribal histories from an indigenous tribal perspective focus on historical experiences that are meaningful to each community as a whole and on the places where a community's epitomizing events occurred. Furthermore, the communication of these experiences rests firmly on the foundation of oral tradition in general, and specific tribal languages in particular." Craig Howe, "Keep Your Thoughts Above the Trees: Ideas on Developing and Presenting Tribal Histories," in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002), 161-180, 165.

⁸¹ Barr, 42. See also J.B. Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82 (1992): 522-542; Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and J. Brett Hill, "Mapping History: Cartography and the Construction of the San Pedro Valley," *History and Anthropology* 15 (2004):175-200 and Lewis, *Cartographic Encounters*. 45.

⁸²Basso, xiii. For continental (and hemispheric) approaches to early American history, see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The Americas: A Hemispheric History* (New York: Modern Library, 2003); Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Paul Mapp, "Atlantic History from Imperial, Continental, and Pacific Perspectives," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 63 (October 1996): 713-24 and Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

That the Potawatomi of Chicago would resist the taking of their land, negotiate the best deals possible when cession was the only option, and continue to pursue claims to ancestral lands is not surprising given the common connection of Native peoples to the land. Like many other Indian peoples in North America, the Pokagon Potawatomi are situated upon a landscape embedded with sacred powers and inscribed with socio-political meaning and value.

Treaty Rights and Land Claims by American Indians

Treaty rights and land claims figure significantly in the history of the Pokagon Potawatomi in Chicago. A treaty is today generally considered to be a written contract or agreement between two sovereign nations. During early contact between American Indians and Europeans, the newcomers frequently considered the Native tribes or leaders as having dominion akin to that of the lords and sovereigns of Spain, England, and France even if they simultaneously undercut this understanding with their pernicious doctrines of discovery, wastelands or the superior rights of Christians. In spite of their legalistic contradictions, European nations entered initially into treaties with the Indian tribes in order to reinforce military and political allegiances, to facilitate trade, and to insure peace.⁸³ Before this contact with Europeans, Native American tribes such as the Potawatomi did not utilize formal written treaty agreements in their previous alliances or agreements with fellow Native American tribes.⁸⁴ However, Natives did have formal conferences in which oral contracts were entered into, and frequently, those agreements were memorialized via the use of wampum belts, birch bark scrolls, or similar devices.

⁸³ Ronald N. Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights: The Reserved Rights of Wisconsin's Chippewa Indians in Historical Perspective* (Madison: Wisconsin Academy of Science, 1996), 48.

⁸⁴ Lawrence C. Kelly, *Federal Indian Policy. Well-illustrated survey of federal government policy toward the Native American population* (New York: Chelsea House, 1989), 32.

With the arrival of the Europeans, American Indian and European customs became interwoven. With the signing of treaties, Europeans and Native Americans held councils, made oral agreements, and written treaties that confirmed the details of their arrangements. The United States made use of these particular conventions in its relations with the natives. In 1768, the United States signed its first treaty, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, with the Six Nations, Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingoes of Ohio.⁸⁵ A little over one hundred years later, in 1871, Congress legislated against making further treaties with the Indian tribes and the United States has since used official agreements between Native Americans and the federal government.⁸⁶ However, in theory, all previously ratified treaties with the Indian tribes remain in full force and effect.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, in 1903, in the *Lone Wolf v Hitchcock* decision,⁸⁸ the United States Supreme Court held that treaties could not limit the ability of Congress to “care” for Indians as a part of the trust responsibility the federal government holds over Indian tribes pursuant to the earlier decision in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831).⁸⁹ The Court in *Lone Wolf* ruled further that Congress had the authority to abrogate treaties as a part of its plenary power over Indian affairs.⁹⁰

From the beginning, the United States often used treaties to acquire Indian lands. In treaty negotiations, many tribal leaders requested particular concessions, including

⁸⁵ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1904-1941), vols. 1-5 and E. B. O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* vol. 8 (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, and Co. 1857), 111–137.

⁸⁶ The 1871 act reads in part, " No Indian nation or tribe ... shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty ... " (25 U.S.C.A. § 71); Larry Nesper, *The Walleye War: The Struggle for Ojibwe Spearfishing and Treaty Rights* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 88.

⁸⁷ Kelly, 54.

⁸⁸ *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, 187 U.S. 553 (1903).

⁸⁹ *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1 (1831).

⁹⁰ Blue Clark, *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock, Treaty Rights & Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 3-6.

specific material items, monetary compensation, specific reserves of lands for tribal members, and guarantees of educational opportunities for their children. In the course of relinquishing their lands, many treaties provided for Native Americans to retain rights to the use of the lands that were ceded to the United States government. Before the sale of these lands, the federal government often formally acknowledged the Native's original possessory interest in the land. The government sometimes also agreed to the recognition of American Indian usufructuary rights to the ceded territories. These particular rights guaranteed that members of the tribe would continue to be able to hunt, fish and gather foods and medicines within the ceded lands or on the bodies of water they embraced. At the end of the 19th and into the 20th centuries, these reserved rights, even when not expired by some stipulated limitation, were usually not respected by the states. Indian peoples throughout the United States have had to resort to the courts to compel recognition of their treaty rights. Those claims have often been over land, and as I explore in the following chapters, the Pokagon Potawatomi similarly, but earlier than most, advanced their claims for the lakefront of Chicago in the courts.

In discussing Pokagon Potawatomi land claims to the Chicago lakefront it is worth noting that there have been numerous works written about claims of the Ojibwe, Hopi, Iroquois, Lakota, and others making their own tribal land claims.⁹¹ In this

⁹¹ Patty Loew, "Hidden Transcripts in the Chippewa Treaty Rights Struggle: A Twice Told Story, Race, Resistance, and the Politics of Power," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 21, no. 2 (Fall 1997); Ronald N. Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights: The Reserved Rights of Wisconsin's Chippewa Indians in Historical Perspective* (Madison: Wisconsin Academy of Science, 1996); James M. McClurken (Compiler, Editor), Charles E. Cleland (Editor), *Fish in the Lakes, Wild Rice, and Game in Abundance: Testimony on Behalf of Mille Lacs Ojibwe Hunting and Fishing Rights* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000); Larry Nesper, "Ogitchida at Waswaggoning: Conflict in the Revitalization of Flambeau Anishinaabe Identity," in *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North American and the Pacific Islands*, ed., Michael Harkin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 225-246; Paul Brodeur, *Restitution: The Land Claims of the Mashpee, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Indians of New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985); Edward Lazarus, *Black Hills/White Justice: The Sioux*

dissertation, I also discuss a claim to the Chicago lakefront that is contemporaneous to that of the Potawatomi, by a man named George Wellington Streeter. Much has been written about Streeter and his claim to “Streeterville” in Chicago.⁹² However, my research reveals no published work that considers the competing and yet complimentary land claims together – or why Streeter is remembered while the Pokagon claim is largely forgotten.

Nation versus the United States, 1775 to the Present (Lawrence: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Donald Mitchell, *Take My Land, Take My Life: The Story of Congress's Historic Settlement of Alaska Native Land Claims, 1960-1971* (Juneau: University of Alaska Press, 2001); E. Richard Hart, ed., *Zuni and the Courts: A Struggle for Sovereign Land Rights* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995); Burke A. Hendrix, *Ownership, Authority, and Self-Determination: Moral Principles and Indigenous Rights Claim* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University, 2008) and Burke A. Hendrix, “Memory in Native American Land Claims,” *Political Theory* vol. 33, no. 6, (December 2005):763-785.

⁹² W.H. Niles, *A Brief History and Legal Standing of the District of Lake Michigan* (Chicago: Swanberg & Co., 1900), 15; Frederick D.C. Langdon, “The Wreck of the ‘Reutan and What Came of It’,” *The Wide World Magazine*, vol. 7 (April-September, 1901): 539-543; Edward B. Clark, “The Amazing History of the Streeterville War,” *Women’s Home Companion* vol. 29, no. 12, (December 1902); William H. Niles, *The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan, Its legal standing as defined by Official letters and papers, by William H. Niles Military Governor – Captain George Streeter, the American Dreyfus, now in the States Prison at Joliet, Ill.* (Chicago: Hufford & Co., 1903); Edward Bergstrom, “Cap Streeter: Squatter King,” *Tradition* vol. 4, no. 10 (Oct. 1961): 23; Everett Guy Ballard, *Captain Streeter, Pioneer* (Chicago: Emery Publishing Service, 1914), 218; Robert Shackleton, “A Modern Corsair,” in *The Book of Chicago* (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company, 1920), Chapter 13; Unknown, “Captain George Wellington Streeter, Battling Hero of the ‘Deestrick of Lake Michigan,’” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 13, no. 4, (January 1921):571-574; Kenneth F. Broomell and Harlow M. Church, “Streeterville Saga,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 33, no. 2, (June 1940):153-165; Mrs. L. Edwards, *My Twenty Years Experience in Streeterville District of Lake Michigan* (Chicago[?]: unknown publisher, [ca.1940]); Francesca Miller, *The Sands, The Story of Chicago’s Front Yard* (Chicago: Valentine-Newman Publishers, 1948); Patricia Bronte, *Vittles and Vice* (Chicago: Henry Regency Company, 1952), 29-32; Joseph Millard, “George Wellington Streeter – All This Out Here Is My Land,” in *No Law But Their Own* (Evanston, IL: Regency Books, 1963):111-158; Lois Willie, *Forever Open, Clear and Free, The Struggle for Chicago’s Lakefront* (Chicago: Henry Regency Co., 1972), 58-61; K.C. Tessendorf, “Captain Streeter’s District of Lake Michigan,” *Chicago History* vol. 5, no. 3, (Fall, 1976):152 -160; John W. Stamper, “Shaping Chicago’s Shoreline,” *Chicago History* vol. 14, no. 4, (1985-1986): 44-55; June Skinner Sawyers, *Chicago Portraits: Biographies of 250 Famous Chicagoans* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1991), 202; June Skinner Sawyers, “The Eccentric Captain of Streeterville,” 9-40, in *Chicago Sketches, Urban Tales, Stories and Legends from Chicago History* (Chicago: Loyola Press/ Wild Onion Books, 1995); Ursula Bielski, *More Chicago Haunts, Scenes from Myth and Memory* (Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 2000), 296-300; Joshua Salzman, “The Chicago Lakefront’s Last Frontier, The Turnerian Mythology of Streeterville, 1886-1961,” *Journal of Illinois History* vol. 9 (Autumn 2006): 201-214 and Scotti Cohn, “The Captain’s War,” 66-70, in *It Happened in Chicago* (Guilford, Conn: Morris Book Publishing, 2009).

The Nature and Characteristics of Interactions Between Peoples as Reflected in Such Concepts as Frontier, Borderlands, Contact Zones, and Transculturation

The interactions between American Indians and European settlers have had significant impact on both peoples and these impacts included the cultural transformations of both peoples. The changes were often felt at what has been called the frontier.⁹³ A frontier is a geo-political connotation for areas close to or beyond a certain boundary.⁹⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner popularized the use of the word “frontier” to connote a region at the border of a settled area peculiar to the development of North America. In the eighteenth century, a frontier was essentially any segment of hinterland of North America lying at the western edge of existing eastern British or early U.S. settlements. Sometimes a frontier was a zone of interaction among settlers and Natives, sometimes it was made by formidable geographical barriers like the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains.⁹⁵ In the Midwest, the Great Lakes became just such a barrier and this dissertation explores the ways in which the Chicago lakefront, in some ways, became a “frontier.”

Turner argued that as settlers moved through the frontier zone, they experienced significant cultural and psychological transformation by their encounters with their surroundings.⁹⁶ Richard White focuses on social rather than environment interactions in concluding the contacts between American Indians and non-Native settlers had

⁹³ Frederick J. Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington DC: GPO and American Historical Association, 1894), 199-227. In 1893, Turner addressed a historical association assembled at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and presented his famous “frontier thesis” which was published the next year.

⁹⁴ White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, 40; Stephen Aron, “Pioneers and Profiteers; Land Speculation and the Homestead Ethic in Frontier Kentucky,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 23:2 (1992): 179.

⁹⁵ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation, the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 38 and White and Limerick, *The Frontier in American Culture*.

⁹⁶ Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 199-227.

significant impacts on both peoples and these impacts often reflected in cultural transformations.⁹⁷ These areas have also been described as contact zones and borderlands.⁹⁸ What these concepts reflect is the recognition that substantial changes are wrought when disparate cultures bump into each other and that peoples and communities are forever changed by such contact. Contact is not a moment or a geographic region, but rather, an ongoing process and experience.⁹⁹

Transculturation describes the phenomenon of the merger and convergence of cultures.¹⁰⁰ Transculturation includes more than simply transition from one culture to another; it entails not only a mere acquisition of another culture or of losing a previously held culture. Transculturation amalgamates culture into a hybrid new. The ability of the Pokagon Potawatomi to maintain their indigeneity in the face of colonization is evidence of transculturational processes. Transculturation emerges from colonial subjugation, particularly in a postcolonial era, as Natives strive to retain their perceptions of identity.¹⁰¹ Vicente Diaz has used the term “thick veneers” to describe and explain cultural change and continuity among the indigenous Chamorro peoples of Guam.¹⁰² “Thick veneers” emphasizes the reality of distinct indigenous lived experiences while

⁹⁷ White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, 40. See also Slotkin, 38; White & Limerick, 52.

⁹⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 3-40; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Carlos G. Velez-Ibanez, *Border Visions, Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 4-6.

⁹⁹ Robert Maxwell Brown, "Backcountry Rebellions and the Homestead Ethic in America, 1740 – 1799," in *Tradition, Conflict, and Modernization; Perspectives on the American Revolution*, ed. Robert Maxwell Brown and Don E. Fehrenbacher (Academic Press: New York, 1977), 73-98, and Eviatar Zerubavael, *Terra Cognita, The Mental Discovery of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁰ Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

¹⁰¹ Zerubavael, 65.

¹⁰² Vicente M. Diaz, *Repositioning the Missionary, Rewriting the Histories of Colonialism, Native Catholicism and Indigeneity in Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 26-32.

acknowledging the difficulty is separating those differences and mixtures from their non-indigenous counterparts.¹⁰³

The Emergence of an “Indigenous” Identity in the United States

Cultural identity, reflected in the beliefs, values and worldviews of people, has been described as the sharing of a widely parallel conceptual map and mode of interpreting symbols and language.¹⁰⁴ However, it is possible for people to identify themselves in numerous other ways apart from by their cultures. Identity is also a mixture of such things such as class, race, education, religion, region and gender. The impact of these features of identity on the status of an individual has the capacity to change over time.¹⁰⁵ Colonialism has intensified such changes. Indians have become “Indians,” “indigenous” and “first peoples,” both in their own minds and in the minds of non-natives. Immigrants and their descendants assumed the heroic mantle of settler-pioneer while Indians were subjected to phases of romanticizing or disdain depending on the prevailing attitudes, agendas, and events of the time.¹⁰⁶

After the formation of the United States, this process of *othering* continued unabated. The history of relations between Natives and non-Natives has been characterized by a struggle over resources and land and whether Indians can be assimilated into the mainstream. American Indians were ultimately relegated to the margins of American society. Efforts at ethnic cleansing (for example, the Trail of Tears), genocide (the Indian Wars of the 19th century), assimilation, (missionization and boarding

¹⁰³ Ibid, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹⁰⁵ William S. Penn, *As We Are Now, Mixblood Essays on Race and Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 22.

¹⁰⁶ Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978); Peter Nabokov, *Native American Testimony, A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1497-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999) and Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

schools) and ossification, literally, into statues, as the vanishing Indian became the settlers' cultural patrimony) were all part of the American Indian experience and was endured by Indians of the Great Lakes region, including the Potawatomi. The literature documenting these eras is extensive.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, Indians did not vanish and many resisted assimilation. After assuming indigenous and national identities in response to pressures and expectations from non-Natives, American Indians, including the Pokagon Potawatomi, fought to retain their hard-won community and individual identities. As a part of the transculturation process, Indians engaged in a persistent and creative adaptation. My dissertation focuses on the ways in which the Pokagon Potawatomi maintained a unique identity and presence in Chicago. Examining, in roughly chronological order, the literature and rhetoric of Simon Pokagon, the spectacles, performances, and monuments of the Potawatomi, their efforts for the restoration of territory, and their engagement with sport and recreation, this dissertation reveals how these activities and practices preserved and promoted a Pokagon Potawatomi presence in the city.

Canoes and Canoeing by American Indians and Others

A canoe is a lightweight, narrow boat with characteristically shaped stern and bow and curved sides, usually propelled via the use of one or more paddles. The canoe was invented by numerous early cultures all over the world. Canoes have different features in regards to size, shape and construction, in accordance to their geographic origins. The earliest types of canoes were hewn or hollowed out of tree trunks. Where the birch bark tree was accessible, American Indians harvested the bark of the tree to fashion

¹⁰⁷ For example, see the references included in Colin Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, 3rd ed. (Cranbury, NJ: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2008).

canoes, with frames of light wood covered with parchments of birch fastened together and sealed with pitch to make them watertight.¹⁰⁸ Natives used canoes as their basic means of travel on North American waterways.¹⁰⁹ Travel via canoes facilitated trade, was instrumental in military affairs and enabled representatives of various tribes to interact frequently.¹¹⁰

European settlers who initially settled in North America quickly adopted the canoe as a fast and effective means of transportation. Canoes were especially popular with trappers and traders as it allowed them to travel with speed and efficiency to other trade settlements along the lakes and rivers of North America.¹¹¹ In other parts of the world, people also relied upon canoes and kayaks as means of fast and effective transport, especially in riverside or coastal areas. Canoes were extensively used in Africa, and European colonialists and traders there were also fascinated with the discovery of advanced technology of water transport being used by Africans in trade and warfare.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Robert E. Ritzenthaler, "The Building of a Chippewa Indian Birch-Bark Canoe," *Milwaukee Public Museum Bulletin* vol. 19, no. 2 (Milwaukee: Museum Board of Trustees, 1972, first printing 1950): 1–33.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Vennum Jr. notes, "Perhaps no single item in the traditional economy combines finesse and craftsmanship better than the birch-bark canoe – historically the principal mode of transportation and cargo-freighting for Indian peoples in the western woodlands. Early European travelers in the American wilderness were amazed by this unfamiliar type of boat and rarely failed to comment on its construction." Thomas Vennum, Jr., "The Enduring Craftsmanship of Wisconsin's Native Peoples: The Ojibwe Birch-Bark Canoe," <http://wwwpbs.org/riverofsong> (accessed February 11, 2010).

¹¹⁰ Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979), first publication 1929 by the Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology as Bulletin 86, 149-154; Carrie A. Lyford, *Ojibwa Crafts* (Stevens Point, WI: R. Schneider, 1982).

¹¹¹ James McClurken notes, "flexible and easy to repair, birch bark canoes ... were the perfect vehicle for traveling Michigan's streams and lakes." Clifton, Cornell, and McClurken, 7. As James Clifton concludes, "Europeans quickly recognized the superiority of many items in the Potawatomi inventory of locally manufactured goods ... the framed up bark canoe – for warm season winter transportation – (was) soon adopted as improvements over anything previously known to Europeans. (It) could be quickly made from readily available local materials and were easily repaired. The Potawatomi style of housing – the dome-shaped, simply framed bard – or mat-sheathed wigwam – was also adopted and regularly used by the French, particularly when traveling. For years, some Potawatomi were employed, at least part time, in constructing canoes and similar gear for the use of French traders ... " Ibid, 49.

¹¹² Donald F. Wood and James C. Johnson, *Contemporary Transportation*, 5th ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 144.

Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi might say that they have had the canoe since the beginning of time. The oral histories of these communities include references to a great flood and an earth diver story in which a cultural hero, Waynaboozhoo, Nanabush, or some other variant survives along with other creatures of the world by clinging variously to a log or a canoe.¹¹³ In most versions, Waynaboozhoo settles on the land created on the back of the turtle and comes to teach the Anishinabeg/Neshnabek all-important things, including the building of birch-bark canoes.¹¹⁴

Chronicling *when* the peoples of the Great Lakes first conceived and produced canoes is difficult.¹¹⁵ As Raymond Fogelson points out in “The Ethnohistory of Events and Nonevents,” writing Indian history can be particularly challenging.¹¹⁶ To summarize and expand upon Fogelson, Native history includes documented events, sometimes conveyed on bark scrolls, animal skins, beadwork, paper, pottery, rocks, geography and orally; imagined events, including perceptions and memories; epitomizing events, including happenings that have been condensed or expanded; latent events, including long-standing and acknowledged but rarely spoken of events; and denied events,

¹¹³ Emerson F. Greenman, *The Indians of Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1961), 6; James A. Clifton, *The Potawatomi*, Indians of North America Series, Frank W. Porter III, general editor, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), 13 and Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest, The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 39.

¹¹⁴ Europeans and Americans transcribed such teachings and having contact with the Native peoples, including the German traveler Johann Georg Kohl, who wrote in 1860 “Even the Indians seem to honour their own invention greatly, and impart to it a divine origin. They say that Menaboju (their Prometheus, or Hercules) invented the canoe. They even point to some half-dozen lumps of stone, on the shore of one of these Apostle Islands (in Lake Superior) and say that Menaboju built his canoe between them, and hung it to dry upon them.” (Second parenthesis added). Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami, Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860) reprinted St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985, 33-34. See also Clifton, *The Potawatomi*, 20. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 17-20.

¹¹⁵ See Clifton, *The Potawatomi*, 20; Johnston, 17-20; Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 41; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Press, 1885, 1984 reprint), 146-147.

¹¹⁶ Raymond Fogelson, “The History of Events and Nonevents,” *Ethnohistory* vol. 36, no 2 (Spring, 1989): 133-147.

including occurrences too painful to speak of or remember. Native history also includes events invisible to outsiders including those kept as private within the community, clan or family; marginalized events, including those dismissed by the dominant society as unimportant, unproven or irrelevant; and reversible events, including events that can be undone or reinscribed.

Since their first appearance upon the landscape of North America, non-natives have been enamored with canoes. Through early eras of the fur trade and exploration to later periods of canoes in art, recreation, romance, and commerce, the canoe has become both native icon and symbol of conquest by non-native appropriation. Samuel de Champlain was the first European to record his impressions of birch bark canoes and their owners in 1603, while trying to travel upstream on the St. Lawrence River.¹¹⁷ In 1609, Champlain participated in a battle against the Iroquois on Lake George. According to Champlain, French firearms and the fast and light birch bark canoes of the Huron, Algonquin and Montagnais resulted in victory over the Iroquois in their slower elm bark canoes. During the fur trade era, canoes were modified and enlarged in order to satisfy the needs of their users. Voyageurs and Indians alike transported their furs and trade goods with this most efficient and ingenious mode of travel. Voyageur canoes would become the subject of all sorts of later romanticized literature and artwork.¹¹⁸ Traders,

¹¹⁷ In trying to traverse the rapids near present day Montreal, Champlain wrote “he who would pass them must provide himself with the canoes of the savages, which a man can easily carry.” Samuel de Champlain, *Les voyages du sieur de Champlain Xaintongeois, capitaine ordinaire pour le roy en la marine. Diuisez en deux liures. Ou, Journal tres-fidele des observations faites es descouuertes de la Nouvelle France ... Ensemble duex cartes geographiques ...* (Paris: Chez lean Berjon, rue S. lean de Beauuais, au Cheval Volant, & en sa boutique au Palais, a la gallerie des prisonniers, 1613). Early on, the benefits of lightweight design were clear, even to the newcomers.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, the painting of Henry Ogden reproduced in “Picturesque Canada” (1901) depicting French traders loading bales of furs into their canoes for the annual spring trip to the Great Lakes. See also, the painting by Frances Anne Hopkins — 1879 — “Shooting the Rapids,” oil on canvas, depicting a thirty-six foot long canoe being paddled through dangerous waters by sixteen hearty voyageurs.

travelers and missionaries all used the canoe to enter into the interior of the northern parts of North America. Many of them wrote about their experiences, with both the peoples and material cultures they encountered, to satisfy curious audiences waiting back in the eastern United States and in Europe. Examples include the writings of J. Carver,¹¹⁹ George Heriot,¹²⁰ Alexander Mackenzie,¹²¹ Samuel Hearne,¹²² and later Johann George Kohl.¹²³ Observing the canoes on Madeline Island in 1854, Kohl wrote,

The form and material of the canoe differ as much as its name. Some hollow out the trunk of a tree, others make their canoes of leather or seal-skins, while others, again, employ bark, especially that of the birch. The latter owing to their lightness and other good qualities, are in most general use. They are found among all the tribes of Canada and the Hudson's Bay

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the interior parts of North America, in the years 1766, 1767, and 1798 ... Illustrated with copper plates*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for the author, by W. Richardson, 1779). Carver traveled through Minnesota almost one hundred years after the arrival of the first European, Father Hennepin. Carver's travel accounts were widely read and include an illustration of canoes being portaged around St. Anthony's Falls at present day Minneapolis.

¹²⁰ George Heriot, *Travels through the Canadas, containing a description of the picturesque scenery on some of the rivers and lakes; with an account of the productions, commerce, and inhabitants of those provinces ...* (London: Printed for Richard Phillips, by T. Gillet, 1807). Heriot was a Scottish born Postmaster General of British North America and described the peoples and landscape at length. Of canoes, he noted their economic value to the Indians as commodities themselves. "The natives who reside there (Mackinac Island) have no occasion to betake themselves to the fatigue of the chase in order to procure a subsistence. When they are inclined to industry, they construct canoes of the bark of the birch-tree, which they sell for from two hundred to three hundred litres each." 185. Heriot also remarked on the use of canoes by Indians to fish. "... they stand in an erect attitude in a birch canoe ... they push with force to the bottom of the waters with a long pole ... In conducting this mode of fishing much practice is required, as an inexperienced person may, by the efforts which he is obliged to make, upset the canoe, and inevitably perish." Ibid, 193.

¹²¹ Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; in the years 1789 and 1793: with a preliminary account of their rise, progress, and present state of the fur trade of that country: illustrated with maps* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, Strand: Corbett and Morgan, Pall-Mall: and W. Creech, at Edinburgh, 1801). In 1789, Mackenzie, a fur trader was keeping copious notes about his activities and experiences, including his impressions of canoes. His descriptions include the following, "Their canoes are small, pointed at both ends, flat bottomed and covered in the fore part. They are made of the bark of the birch-tree and fir wood, but of so light a construction that the man whom one of these light vessels bears on the water, can, in return, carry it over land without any difficulty." Ibid, 39.

¹²² Samuel Hearne, *A journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, &c., in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1795). Hearne began working for the Hudson Bay Company about 1765. He built the first inland trading post, Cumberland House, in 1774, and observed canoes on a regular basis while living at the intersection of a significant trade route.

¹²³ Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami, Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway*. Kohl was a German travel writer who spent time in the Lake Superior region documenting Ojibwe traditions and stories for his European audience.

territory, far to the north wherever the birch grows, especially among the wandering, fishing, and hunting tribes of the great Algic nation, who constantly employ canoes, as other nomadic races do horses or camels. (N)ew canoes are being constantly built around me or old ones repaired and I saw them in every stage of perfection. The Indians expend as many bark canoes as we do hunting-boots...The largest and smoothest trees are selected so that the pieces of bark may be as large as possible and prevent too much sewing.¹²⁴

Artists were the next to document and implant canoes into the collective imagination of non-natives. Illustrators such as George Catlin,¹²⁵ Paul Kane,¹²⁶ Seth Eastman¹²⁷ and James Otto Lewis¹²⁸ all contributed to the canoe being embraced as a part of the national patrimony. Catlin concluded,

¹²⁴ Ibid. 27-29.

¹²⁵ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians Written During Eight Years' Travel (1832-1839) amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians of North America* (London: Tilte and Bogue, 1842). Reprinted as George Catlin, *North American Indians*, ed. Peter Matthiessen (New York: Penguin Books, 1989). See also Catlin, *Illustrations of the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians: In a Series of Letters and Notes*, 2 volumes (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851) which features a depiction by the artist of a canoe race near Sault Ste. Marie, 1836-1837.

¹²⁶ Paul Kane, *Wandering of an Artist Among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon, Through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again ...* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1859). An artist from Ireland, Kane endeavored to capture depictions of Indian life before it changed. With the financial support of the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, Kane traveled throughout Canada during the years 1845-1848.

¹²⁷ Seth Eastman, illustrator for Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *The Indian Tribes of the United States, History, Antiquities, Customs, Religion, Arts, Languages, Traditions, Oral Legends & Myths* (Philadelphia: J.R. Lippincott & Co. 1884). See also the illustrations in Schoolcraft, *Historical and statistical information, respecting the history, condition and prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States: collected and prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs per act of Congress of March 3d, 1847*, illustrated by S. Eastman, 6 volumes (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1851-60.). Included in images are the depictions of Eastman of "Spearing Fish from a Canoe" (plate 28), and "Gathering Wild Rice," (plate 31). See also Sarah E. Boehme, Christian F. Feest and Patricia Condon Johnston, *Seth Eastman: A Portfolio of North American Indians* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press, 1995). Known primarily as an explorer, Schoolcraft was also a geologist, Indian agent, and amateur ethnologist. He married an Ojibwe woman and in 1847 was commissioned by Congress to compile an encyclopedic work on American Indians. The six volume set was illustrated by Captain Seth Eastman. Eastman's drawings were the first to reveal details of the canoe and they helped many readers to visualize their construction and use.

¹²⁸ Lewis was the illustrator for Thomas Loraine McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes, of the Character and Customs of the Chippeway Indians, and of Incidents Connected With the Treaty of Fond du Lac ... Also, a Vocabulary of the Algic, or Chippeway Language, Formed in Part, and as Far as It Goes, Upon the Basis of One Furnished by ... A. Ballatin* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, 1827). McKenney's journal made for avid reading, including subscribers to the newspaper of the Cherokee Nation, the Cherokee Phoenix. In 1828, the paper included the remarks of McKenney. "Description of a Bark Canoe. Sault de St. Marie, July 8, 1826 ... I have been examining this canoe, with the view of describing it-but the thing is so new to me in all respects, that I am doubtful where to begin with it. Its length is thirty feet,

“The bark canoe of the Chippeways is, perhaps, the most beautiful and light model of all water crafts that were ever invented. They are generally made complete with the rind of one birch tree, and so ingeniously shaped and sewed together, with the roots of the tamarack, which they call *wat-tap*, that they are water-tight, and ride upon the water, as light as a cork. They gracefully lean and dodge about, under the skilful (sic) balance, of an Indian...but like everything wild, are timid and treacherous under the guidance of (a) white man; and, if he be not an equilibrist, he is sure to get two or three times soused, in his first endeavors at familiar acquaintance with them.”¹²⁹

It was only a matter of time before the canoe would become a romanticized icon as well as sports-utility vehicle for outdoor types. Charles Lanham, journalist, artist, librarian, and travel writer, may have been the first person to use the canoe solely as a pleasure craft. He saw the wilderness as a place to renew oneself, not as obstacle or resource to deplete. He described nature in spiritual terms and frequently bemoaned the loss of the canoe to other watercraft such as barges, rafts, and steamboats.¹³⁰ Wrote Henry Longfellow in his *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855),

Thus the Birch Canoe was builded
In the valley, by the river,
In the bosom of the forest;
And the forest's life was in it,
All its mystery and its magic,

and its breadth across the widest part, about four feet. It is about two feet and a half deep in the center, but only about two feet near the bow and stern. Its bottom is rounded and has no keel Our baggage and store, and the provisions for voyagers, and our tents, &c., are estimated to weigh at least five hundred weight; and then there will be eleven of us ... so the canoe of bark is destined to carry not less than two thousand pounds!” “McKenney’s Tour,” *Cherokee Phoenix*, vol. 1, no. 15, pg. 4, col. 4a, Wednesday, June 4, 1828.

¹²⁹ Catlin, *North American Indians*, 415.

¹³⁰ Charles Lanman, *Essays for Summer Hours* (Boston: Hillard, Gray & Co., 1842). Lanman also wrote *A Summer in the Wilderness, Embracing a Canoe Voyage Up the Mississippi and Around Lake Superior* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1847). From St. Louis, Lanman journeyed up the Mississippi River by steamboat and birch bark canoe. “Their only vehicle is the birch canoe, so famous for its beautiful model, its frailty and feathery lightness. The bark of the birch, out of which it is made, is found in great abundance throughout their entire territory and they use it, not only for canoes, but for their lodges, their grave houses, their baskets, their mocucks, their dishes, and exquisitely worked boxes, which they dispose of as curiosities.” Lanman, *Essays for Summer Hours*, 96-97. In *Essays for Summer Hours*, Lanman lamented “The Indian canoe is giving way to the more costly but less beautiful rowboat, and those rivers are becoming deeper every day. Instead of the howl of the wolf, the songs of the husbandman now echo through the vales.” Lanman, *A Summer in the Wilderness*, 42.

All the lightness of the birch-tree
All the toughness of the cedar,
All the larch's supple sinews;
And it floated on the river
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily.¹³¹



Fig: 2.1: Young boy holding a canoe¹³²

Anthropologists, ethnologists, collectors, and museum curators would later dissect this product of indigenous ingenuity. “Salvage Anthropology,” the effort to collect and preserve the traditions of indigenous peoples (presumably because they were going to disappear), has a long history in nineteenth and early twentieth century American anthropology.¹³³

This dissertation explores the intersections between Indians living in the Chicago of the 1960's and 70's reconnecting with a traditional activity for sport and recreation and some of the ways that activity contributed to a continuing Pokagon Potawatomi presence in Chicago. The birch bark canoe remains an important signifier to the Ojibwe, Odawa

¹³¹ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1993), 1885 reprint.

¹³² Circa 1870's ambrotype of a young boy holding a prized toy birch bark canoe. (From the collection of the author).

¹³³ Thomas, 44.

and the Potawatomi of the genius of their ancestors. It conveys a message in its design, to Natives and non-Natives alike, of the paradox of sophistication and elegant simplicity and connects contemporary Indian people in the Great Lakes to their pasts.¹³⁴ In this dissertation, I examine the use of canoes, not of birch bark, but of fiberglass, in Chicago by members of the American Indian Center's Chicago Canoe Club.

The Power of Traditional Practices and Objects

American Indians across the country and indigenous peoples around the world have preserved and recovered their traditions as a part of celebrating their sense of community. As Native peoples have recovered these traditions, some scholars have argued over their "authenticity." Objects from the past have their own meanings and power, and these are manifested in several ways. Objects have biographies that we, as interpretative communities, write and rewrite.¹³⁵ However, objects do not carry meanings by themselves. The context in which objects are handled matters a great deal. They do not carry memory alone. Who possesses them, the knowledge of how to make them, the manner in which they came into existence, and the ways they are used speaks powerfully

¹³⁴ The fascination of non-Natives with the birch-bark canoe was such that miniature birch-bark canoes made by Indians became a staple souvenir item throughout the United States in the twentieth century. Images of canoes were used to sell everything from Chocolate to Tonic, as well as, tobacco, butter, baking soda, fruit and vegetables, toothpicks and vacations, and trade card images of Indian canoes as commodified icons of advertising abound. Canoes invoke a sense of health, naturalness, and free-spiritedness apparently appealing to consumers. The Goudey Gum Company of Boston even issued a picture pack series entitled "Indian Gum," No. 36 of that series that reads, "Making a Canoe: The Indians were master craftsmen in the art of making canoes and many painstaking hours were spent in their construction. The frames were made of strong green saplings, steamed and bent to the proper shapes. A covering of the finest birch bark was then applied over the frames and secured by thongs of raw hide." (From the personal collection of the author.) The canoe building revival represents a taking back of this tourist and commercial item and a repositioning of it as a representative of Indian creativity. This is an integral part of the reimagination process. See Jeffrey Steele, "Reduced to Images: American Indians in Nineteenth-Century Advertising," in ed. Bird, *Dressing in Feathers, the Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, 45.

¹³⁵ These meanings are ascribed to them through interaction with their audiences. Objects are powerful carriers of messages. Items of material culture carry histories, beliefs, values systems, spirituality, artistry, creativity, and all the other things that constitute "culture," including collected memories. Objects are not mere representations of culture; they are signposts, message boards, and texts of the cultural lives of the communities from which they originate.

of control and authority. Potawatomi display, for example, of a birch bark wigwam/tipi, like the use of the Potawatomi language, asserts the reclaiming and recovery of powerful native knowledge. A potent counter-colonial and counter-hegemonic act with lasting implications, it reflects American Indian peoples taking back their cultural patrimony and stories; and rewrites the narratives of dispossession so that the concluding chapter is not the all too familiar eulogy of loss frequently associated with Indian peoples. Through such an act, communities are restored and have voice; they are understood by both members and outsiders to be rightful participants in the social, cultural, and political processes of the mainstream. Such an act demonstrates an understanding that objects are not just things that occupy space. Rather, they have social, political, and cultural life and capital. Writing, speaking, and building, rich with implications for intellectual and material property, are opportunities for Native women and men to make their own histories by using the past to ‘read’ the present and reread their histories in objects of the past.

Producing birch bark clad books, tipis and canoes as a symbol of individual and community identities is completely consistent with the selection of recognizably significant items of material culture.¹³⁶ Many American Indians, like many peoples who feel their connections to the past threatened, seek out and embrace the material objects of their ancestors as a touchstone representing survival and continuity.¹³⁷ So, what is at

¹³⁶ The power of material culture is outlined in Victor Buchli, ed., *The Material Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2002). “... ‘artefactuality’ is just as effective as it was early on ... They have specific social effects as relevant along the continuum of various materialized and de-materialized states ... They all produce a certain artefactuality ... that is an artefact effect with contingent social purpose ... whose respective social worths are assessed in terms of how they are able to mediate between one state and other with their respective social effects.” Ibid, 18.

¹³⁷ Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-91; Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze, Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in*

stake in embracing traditional activities and practices? Individuals and communities maintain their recognition by both participants and observers of a distinct and unique indigeneity. As I explore in this dissertation, that is the power of tradition. As Winona LaDuke writes,

“There is a word in (Ojibwe): *ji-misawaabandaaming*. That word...describes the process as sort of positive windowshopping for your future. That is what we as Anishinaabeg need to be about. And in order to do that, we need to recover our knowledge and recover ourselves...”¹³⁸

American Indians and Sports in the 20th Century

American Indians have always had sports and games as a part of leisure, competition and sometimes ceremony. Beginning in the 19th century, Native Americans participated in sports as a means of asserting their identity in American society. Indians have played the sports of Euro-Americans, and have introduced their own sports into American society. From the blanket toss to lacrosse, traditional Native American sports have endured. Irrespective of the origins of the native sport, whether for entertainment or for religious purposes, sports have always being important and continue to play a significant role in Native Indian communities. Sports and other recreational activities contribute to the development of agility, strength, and coordination. They also contribute

American Art, 1890-1915 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Edwina Taborsky, “The Discursive Object,” in *Objects of Knowledge*, ed. S.M. Pearce (London: The Archlane Press, 1990), 50-77; Susan M. Pearce, “Objects Inside and Outside Museums,” in *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, ed. S.M. Pearce (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 15-35, 15; Annie E. Coombes, “Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities,” in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, B.M. Carbonell (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998): 331-46, 336; Steven Leuthold, *Indigenous Aesthetics, Native Art, Media and Identity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Christopher Tilly, “Metaphor, Materiality and Interpretation,” in Victor Buchli, ed. *The Material Culture Reader*, 25. Tilly adds, “The enduring symbolic and social significance of the canoe for Wala islanders has always principally resided in its use as a vehicle of power, and in the social relationships that it engenders ... On another and more abstract plane of meaning the canoes are a dynamic symbolic manifestation of the strength and *power* of the past in the present.” Ibid, 53. See also Elaine Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of, Elaine Heumann Gurian* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1. Gurian identifies the importance of objects as evidence of history and heritage to Native peoples.

¹³⁸ Winona LaDuke, “Foreword,” in Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Waasa Inaabida, Ojibwe We Look in All Directions* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 10.

to senses of unity among participants. During the boarding school era in American history, from 1880 to 1940, residential schools often fielded football, basketball, and baseball teams. Playing against other boarding schools, as well as against teams of non-Natives, the playing field became a space in which Indians were not only able to celebrate an identity as Indian, but also to prove themselves formidable adversaries.¹³⁹ They used sports as an opportunity to confront stereotypes and dispel notions that they were peoples locked in the past.¹⁴⁰ A traditional game, lacrosse — or stickball — has been played since before recorded time by many tribes, particularly east of the Mississippi. Not only did lacrosse encourage and foster physical development, it also promoted peace among fellow tribes, and in modern times it is serving to promote native Indian culture and identity.¹⁴¹ Lacrosse has become popular with non-Natives as well. There is a professional indoor lacrosse league comprised of non-Indians and native Indians, and an Iroquois National team includes representatives from all six Iroquois Confederacy tribes. This Iroquois National team that has taken part in the World Cup games, playing against other countries, including Japan and the United States.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do, Sports at Native American Boarding Schools* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Larry Colton, *Counting Coup, A True Story of Basketball and Honor On the Little Big Horn* (New York: Warner Books Inc., 2000) and Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Hopi Footraces and American Marathons, 1912-1930," *American Quarterly* vol. 62, no. 1 (March 2010): 77-101.

¹⁴⁰ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004). 109-135; Richard King, ed. *Native Athletes in Sport and Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); LeAnne Howe, *Miko Kings, An Indian Baseball Story* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007); Tom Swift, *Chief Bender's Burden, The Silent Struggle of a Baseball Star* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); John Bloom, "'There is Madness in the Air': Haskell Homecoming and Popular Representation of Sports in Federal Indian Boarding Schools," in *Dressing in Feathers, The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. Bird, 97 -110.

¹⁴¹ Steven A. Riess, *Major Problems in American Sport History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 14.

¹⁴² Thomas Vennum Jr., *American Indian Lacrosse, Little Brother of War* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 33; Raymond Fogelson, "The Cherokee Ballgame Cycle: An Ethnographer's View," *Ethnomusicology* vol. 15, no. 3 (September, 1971): 327-338.

In this dissertation, I examine the ways that recreational and competitive canoeing contributed to the presence of the Pokagon Potawatomi in Chicago, similar to the ways lacrosse, baseball, basketball, football, and other sports have done similar work for other Indians peoples in the United States and indigenous peoples around the world.¹⁴³

Urban Indians

There is a substantial body of literature regarding the urban Indian experience generally and specifically in Chicago. However, almost all of the works concentrate either on Indians of Chicago before it was a city up to the 1833 Treaty of Chicago or on the relocation and post-relocation periods after World War II.¹⁴⁴ Even the works that

¹⁴³ Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger, *The International Politics of Sport in the 20th Century* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁴⁴ Jack Waddell & O. Michael Watson, *The American Indian in Urban Society* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1971); Alan L. Sorkin, *The Urban American Indian* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1978); Sol Tax, "The Impact of Urbanization on American Indians," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 436 (1978): 121-36; Russell Thornton, Gary D. Sandefur, and Harold G. Grasmick, *The Urbanization of American Indians, A Critical Bibliography* (Chicago: The Newberry Library Center for the History of the American Indian, 1982); Terry Straus, ed. *Indians of the Chicago Area* (Chicago: NAES College Press, 1989); Terry Straus, ed. *Native Chicago* (Chicago: Albatross Press, 2002); Grant Arndt, "Contrary to Our Way of Thinking': The Struggle for an American Indian Center in Chicago, 1946-1953," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* vol. 22, no. 4, Special Issue on American Indians and the Urban Experience (1998): 117-134; James V. Fenelon, "Discrimination and Indigenous Identity in Chicago's Native Community," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* vol. 22, no. 4, Special Issue on American Indians and the Urban Experience (1998): 273-303; Jack Forbes, "The Urban Tradition Among Native Americans," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* vol. 22, no. 4, Special Issue on American Indians and the Urban Experience (1998): 15-27; Susan Lobo, "Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Urban Indian Country," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* vol. 22, no. 4, Special Issue on American Indians and the Urban Experience (1998): 43-65; Susan Lobo, *American Indians and the Urban Experience* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2001); Susan Lobo, "Urban Clan Mothers: Key Households in Cities," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 27, no. 3/4, (Summer/Fall, 2003): 505-522; Susan Applegate Krouse, "Kinship and Identity: Mixed Bloods in Urban Indian Communities," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* vol. 23, no. 2 (1999): 73-89; Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather Howard-Bobiwash. "Keeping the Campfires Going: Urban American Indian Women's Community Work and Activism," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 27, no. 3/4 (June 1, 2003): 489-490; David R. M. Beck, "The Chicago American Indian Community, An 'Invisible' Minority," in *Native Chicago*, ed. Terry Straus and Grant Arndt (Chicago: McNaughton & Gunn, 1998), 293-307; James B. LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Donald L. Fixico, *Urban Indians* (New York: Chelsea House, 1991); Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); Donald L. Fixico, *American Indians in a Modern World* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2006); Donald L. Fixico, "Developing a Voice: The

explore the urban Indian experience in Chicago after 1945 give little, if any, mention to the American Indian Center Canoe Club, or to the Potawatomi still in Chicago. This dissertation addresses the Canoe Club as a manifestation of the ongoing presence of the Potawatomi in Chicago. The larger thesis is that the Pokagon Potawatomi have maintained a presence in the city since its incorporation in 1833 to the present.

Memory Work

Mikwéndek – What is remembered (Potawatomi)
Ni je ga je mikwéndek? – What was remembered?
I yé i émikwéndek – That is what is remembered.

In the following chapters, I explore the ways in which the Pokagon Potawatomi reminded Chicagoans that they had not disappeared. How did Simon Pokagon's storytelling remind the residents of Chicago of their native past? How did tipis, wigwams, and canoes maintain an indigenous foothold in the collective memories of Chicagoans? How do monuments and memorials manifest, preserve and promote such memories? How did, and how does the Potawatomi lawsuit for the Chicago lakefront negate assumptions that the first urban Indians of Chicago were no more? How did spectacles such as the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the encampment of Potawatomi along the lakefront in 1903, and the canoes traveling down the Chicago river and elsewhere in the 1960's and 70's, operate as living monuments and memorials to the continued vitality of the Potawatomi?

Evolution of Self-Determination in an Urban Indian Community," *Wicazo Sa Review* vol. 17, no. 2 (Autumn, 2002): 117-141; and Theodore J. Karamanski, "Return of the Native, American Indians as Urban Immigrants," *Journal of Urban History* vol. 32, no. 6 (September 2006): 900-907. See also Tracy Ullman, "Chicago's Urban Indians," *Chicago Stories*, <http://www.wttw.com/main.taf?p=1,7,1,1,21> (accessed August 4, 2010).

Collective memory is an idea developed by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs to separate the concept from individual memory. Collective memory is shared, handed down and developed by a society or group. Collective memory is similar to cultural memory, but, Jan Assmann differentiates between cultural memory and communicative memory. He maintains that cultural memory plays a storage function and that communicative memory plays the function of an everyday memory placed in the present.¹⁴⁵ The contributions to the function of spaces and places of shared memory, such as monuments and memorials are also significant.¹⁴⁶ The importance of collective memory to this dissertation is in framing the question of whether the Pokagon Potawatomi have maintained a presence in their ancestral lands, now known as Chicago, and, if so, how memory has operated to facilitate that persistence.¹⁴⁷

According to Halbwachs, individual memory is embedded within the social framework from which it is constructed. He argued that we all belong to many social groups and that a collective memory is attached to each of them.¹⁴⁸ Pierre Nora has provided an influential attempt to understand the function of collective memory in modernity. For Nora, “sites of memory” have become the fixed, externalized locations of what was once an internal socialized memory. According to Nora, History (with a capital

¹⁴⁵ Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37.

¹⁴⁷ Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion in the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3-23, 7; L.G. Moses, “Performative Traditions in American Indian History,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 193-208.

¹⁴⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: 1980). Wrote Halbwachs, “Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time. The totality of past events can be put together in a single record only by separating them from the memory of the groups who preserved them and by severing the bonds that held them close to the psychological life of the social milieu where they occurred, while retaining the groups chronological and spatial outline of them. *Ibid*, 65.

H and as a national narrative) has besieged and ossified memory.¹⁴⁹ Theoretical differences between individual, collective, social and historical memory dwell in our understandings of what is saved, preserved, remembered, and retrieved.¹⁵⁰ In addition, how that past is then re-presented, is what Barry Schwartz and others term “collective representation.”¹⁵¹ Schwartz clears a path for understanding the past in terms of spatiality rather than linearity, in order to “lift a past instant out of its place on the continuum of time and drop it into another place.”¹⁵²

Why do traditional art, artifacts, and practices have importance to Native peoples? Their power is not only in the individual memories they convey but in the collective memories with which they are imbued,¹⁵³ and which facilitate the individual and collective need to be connected to a past.¹⁵⁴ For native peoples, memory can be re-collection. Retrieval of the past is how memory and history are reconfigured.¹⁵⁵ The power is in reconnecting the past to the present and to the future.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁹ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: *Les lieux de memoire*,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25.

¹⁵⁰ See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory, The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, ed. *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

¹⁵¹ Barry Schwartz, “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in collective Memory,” *Social Forces* vol. 61, no. 2 (Dec., 1982): 374-402.

¹⁵² Schwartz, 395.

¹⁵³ “... nearly all the most resilient oppositional cultures have been rooted in collective memory, in precipitates of past historical experience.” Jackson Lears, “Power, Culture, and Memory,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 75, no. 1 (Jun., 1988):137-140, 138.

¹⁵⁴ “Objects matter in cultural process, especially among peoples who have not relied on written texts for the recording of knowledge. Stripped bare of their traditional objects of use, beauty and power, Native American communities have suffered interruptions of historical memory, paralyzing failures in the generational transfer of political and sacred power and the cessation of organic growth in many ancient stylistic and iconographic traditions.” Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, “Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-presenting Native American Arts,” *The Art Bulletin* vol.77, no. 1 (1995): 6-10, 9.

¹⁵⁵ According to Carolyn Steedman, “A modern ‘identity’, constructed through the process of identification, is at once a claim for absolute sameness, a coincidence and matching with the desired object, group, or person (perhaps a historical identity, located in the historical past) and at the same time, in the enclosed circuit of meaning, is a process of individuation, the modern making of an individuality and a unique

Memory serves as a means of producing knowledge and as an agent in the preservation of the past. Memory is a process by which some things are remembered, forgotten, imagined and invented. The authority of memory can be institutionalized into religious traditions, legends, songs, and literature, and the memories are stored in places of worship, museums and archives, where than they can be reified, and reinterpreted for new purposes and a multitude of agendas. Memory becomes "evidence" for those who recollect.¹⁵⁷ Collective memories are transferred from one person to another in order to make "remembering in common possible."¹⁵⁸ Rituals, myths, symbols, and practices are all a part of memory making and memorializing. Collective memory is metaphoric and legitimizing. It can embody a shared past and a national/group identity. It is partly through the collective construction of the past that communal identities emerge.¹⁵⁹

personality. In the project of finding an identity through the processes of historical identification, the past is searched for something (someone, some group, some series of events) that confirms the searcher in his or her sense of self, confirms them as they want to be, and feel in some measure that they already are." Carolyn Steedman, *The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 77.

¹⁵⁶ LeAnne Howe writes, "Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story, a tribalography ... tribalography ... achieves a new understanding in theorizing on Native studies. This is a tall order for a storyteller, but here goes. Native stories, no matter what form they take (novel, poem, drama, memoir, film, history) seem to pull all the elements together of the storyteller's tribe, meaning the people, the land, and multiple characters and all their manifestations and revelations, and connect these in past, present, and future milieus (present and future milieus mean non-Indians) ... tribalography comes from the Native propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbiotically connecting one thing to another. LeAnne Howe, "The Story of America: A Tribalography," in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002), 29-50.

¹⁵⁷ Barry Schwartz, 374-402; George Lipitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Michel Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 59-60; Stuart Hall, ed. *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories, The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back Into Collective Memory," *The American Historical Review* vol. 102, no. 5 (Dec., 1997): 1372-1385; Allan Megill, "History, Memory, Identity," *History of the Human Sciences*, 11:3 (1998): 37-62; Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Re-Membering the History of the Hawaiian Hula," in ed. J.M. Mageo, *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 187-204.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁵⁹Taborsky, 50-70.

Memory has power because of its multiplicity of interpretation, uses, and transferability.¹⁶⁰ The power of remembering and forgetting is of particular importance in Chapters 5 and 6 where I explore the competing land claims of the Pokagon Potawatomi and George W. Streeter.

Monuments and memorials are edifices, obelisks, statues and other objects of material culture that stand as a memory device recalling an entity, individual, or past event.¹⁶¹ I highlight the traditional monuments by non-Natives to honor the memory of Chicago's first peoples.¹⁶² But monuments need not be only objects constructed of granite, marble, bronze or similar material. I argue that the Pokagon Potawatomi constructed monuments, when and where they could, in Chicago. These were primarily birch bark tipis and wigwams. Potawatomi also promoted and participated in more ephemeral monuments and living memorials, such as the literature of Simon Pokagon, the rhetoric of land claims, and the spectacles of encampments, bell ringing, speeches,

¹⁶⁰ James E. Young has introduced the idea of "collected" memory to better describe memory's inherently fragmented, collected, and individual character. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials, and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 7. Michael Rothberg argues that the connections between collective memory and group identity is dialogic, what he terms a theory of multidirectional memory, in which memories of multiple peoples and events interact productively in much the same ways peoples accept, accommodate, incorporate and/or reject all sorts of outsider influences. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization (Cultural Memory in the Present)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). As Marita Sturken notes, "Memory is crucial to the understanding of a culture precisely because it indicates collective desires, needs and self-identification." Sturken, 8.

¹⁶¹ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1995), 19; Kristen A. Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 175; Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting, Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Nora, 7-25; Jonathan Boyarin, *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: *Les lieux de memoire*," *History and Memory* 6:1 (1994):123-48.

¹⁶² Edward Livingston Taylor, "Monuments to Historical Indian Chiefs," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* vol. 11, Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society/Fred J. Heer (1903): 1-29; Marion E. Gridley, *America's Indian Statues* (Chicago: The Amerindian/Towertown Press, 1966).

canoeing etc, that not only entertained the Chicago public, but also maintained the ties of the Pokagon Potawatomi to *their* Chicago.

Conclusion

As outlined above, the Pokagon Potawatomi people represent an important and understudied example of the ways in which American Indian peoples retained a presence in the United States despite efforts at assimilation and marginalization. The Pokagon Potawatomi not only maintained this presence in rural areas of southwest Michigan and northwest Indiana, but also retained a position in the city of Chicago – the great urban center of the United States built upon the ancestral lands of the Potawatomi. Simon Pokagon, Michael Williams, and Leroy Wesaw are the three individuals whom this dissertation particularly addresses to explore the ways in which Chicago remained in the collective memory of the Potawatomi, and how the Potawatomi remained in the collective memory of Chicagoans. But many other Potawatomi contributed to the work this dissertation reveals. The result of that work can be simply put: since before its incorporation as a city in 1833 to the present, Pokagon Potawatomi Indians have been part of the urban Indian experience in Chicago.

Chapter 3
The Rhetoric of Simon Pokagon:
Claims of Equality, Appeals for Reconciliation & Inclusion

Introduction

While the Potawatomi were not Chicago's *only* "first urban Indians," their history is woven throughout the city's history. This dissertation focuses on Pokagon Potawatomi tribal members of prominence because their voices remain available to us through literature, images, newspapers, and archives. In the late 19th century, Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member, Simon Pokagon, became a fixture on the Chicago literary and social scene. The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi avoided removal west after passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and members have continued to live in southwest Michigan and northwest Indiana, near Chicago, from the City's incorporation in 1833 to the present. Simon Pokagon's activities are sufficiently documented to provide evidence of the influence of the Pokagon Potawatomi in Chicago. Utilizing methods, materials, and language from his past, Simon Pokagon spent his time in Chicago communicating his hope that the Potawatomi would be accorded the same rights and privileges as others in modern American society.

The Ancestral Voice of Simon Pokagon

Simon Pokagon – I write from quite a distance from this man. I too am Pokagon Band Potawatomi, although I do not know whether he would recognize me as a fellow tribal member because of my so-called mixed-blood ancestry. I have heard stories about him all my life. He is cast as both hero and villain in the stories. This is in part because

the Pokagon community has had deep divisions at least since the death of his father and tribal patriarch, Leopold Pokagon, in 1853, whose passing resulted in the physical rupture of the Band.¹⁶³ Simon's father, Leopold Pokagon had probably been present at the taking of Fort Dearborn in 1812, and was definitely a signatory to the cession of tribal lands in the Great Lakes region in the Chicago Treaty of 1833. However, in the October, 1832, Treaty at Tippecanoe, both he and his wife had each been granted one section of land. From the sale of these parcels and payments from the 1833 treaty, Leopold Pokagon purchased 874 acres in what is now Cass County, Michigan.¹⁶⁴ The tribe relocated after the 1833 Treaty to that land. The oral tradition of the community is that after the death of Leopold in 1841, the property held in his name for the benefit of tribal members became a source of dispute as a pair of Catholic priests attempted to assert ownership of the lands. Leopold's widow attempted to secure payment for the "communal" lands from other tribal members and Leopold's son attempted to secure contribution from other tribal members for property taxes. The result was that while some of the Band remained at Sisters Lake, many of the tribal members relocated to the Rush Lake/Hartford Michigan area, and others moved south towards South Bend, Indiana and Notre Dame University.¹⁶⁵

The Pokagon family became a focal point for controversy and animosity because of those land disputes; Simon Pokagon was not immune from those feelings of ill will.

Along with the expectations that came from his being a child of Leopold Pokagon, there

¹⁶³ For discussions of the specifics of the rupture in the Pokagon Potawatomi community, see James Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983* (Lanham: American University Press), 73-76 and Cecilia Bain Buechner, "The Pokagons," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Soc. Publications vol. 10, no. 5, (1933).

¹⁶⁴ Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men, Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 69.

¹⁶⁵ Buechner, 312.

were also stories that Simon Pokagon sold the tribe's claims to the Chicago lakefront without appropriate authority and for personal gain.¹⁶⁶ The undercurrent within the Pokagon community was that some believed he was a lackey; a sort of "Uncle Tom," a "good Indian" and an overrated representative of the community, someone more interested in impressing the literary circles of his time than in advocating on behalf of his own people.¹⁶⁷ He receives an ambivalent reception from critical literature scholars and historians as well, partly because of questions surrounding his authorship of the novel *Queen of the Woods*.¹⁶⁸

My intention here is not to bolster nor to undermine Pokagon's status among either Native or non-Native peoples. My goal is to try to imagine what Simon Pokagon's intentions might have been in writing, or doing, what he did; to reflect upon the contexts in which *Queen of the Woods* and his other works were written; to examine the issue of authorship of the novel, and to explore his influence upon the city of Chicago. His essays serve as a testimonial of indigeneity, reflecting a recently acquired form of communication by Indian peoples,¹⁶⁹ and his life reflects the continuity of Indian presence in Chicago that is rarely spoken of today. I use the terms indigenous and indigeneity here to refer to those peoples and communities who, after contact with outsiders, either adopted an identity as, or were labeled, the first upon the land. The term

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 5 for a thorough discussion of the intrigue involved in the Pokagon Potawatomi claim to the Chicago lakefront.

¹⁶⁷ Everett Claspy, *The Potawatomi Indians of Southwestern Michigan* (Ann Arbor: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1966), 23.

¹⁶⁸ Simon Pokagon, *O-GÎ-MÄW-KWÈ MIT-Î-GWÄ-KÎ (Queen of the Woods) Also a Brief Sketch of the Algaic Language* (Hartford, MI: C.H. Engle, 1899, 1901).

¹⁶⁹ When I use the term "indigeneity" I am not using it as a synonym for American Indian. Rather, I am influenced by the course I took with Philip Deloria and Gustavo Verdesio at the University of Michigan, "Rethinking Indigeneity." I use it to denote those peoples around the world that were first inhabitants of lands at the moment of contact with outside settler-colonists after 1492. See also Robert Dale Parker, *The Invention of Native American Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). See also Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red, Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 2-4.

is particularly important in this dissertation as length of residency and connection to the land often has defined the legal, political, and social status and rights of American Indian people in the United States.

Walter Benjamin noted that libraries are dwellings and books are the foundational stones.¹⁷⁰ So it is with *Queen of the Woods*. Many libraries about American Indians, and specifically American Indian literature and/or the Potawatomi, include the novel *Queen of the Woods*. For tribal members, it is not important that they have read it. Perhaps, what is important is that it exists and that a tribal member wrote it. *Queen of the Woods* serves for some as a touchstone for identity and community; identity is an edifice that enlarges when times are good and contracts when they are not. Certain acts contribute to that structure or undermine it. New rooms, walls, and windows can be added while others are taken down, moved, or remodeled. They can be manifested in buildings, words (written or spoken), images, claims, and material culture. These structures are the homes too of shared experience, worldviews, and ideology; they house similarly situated and identified members who present a façade of cohesion to the outside world. These structures reflect the fads, fashion, temper, and tone of the times, and if strongly built they will strategically accommodate substantial renovations. Communities are held together by shared values and memories. When the familiar is wiped from the earth, new landmarks must be created to hold the memories of a community. Simon Pokagon's writings and his many references to the landscape and to the language of his ancestors and the material culture of his forbearers created a new geography for Pokagon tribal community members, so that they did not feel entirely lost.

¹⁷⁰ Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library" in *Illuminations, Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 67.

The current interest of some Native peoples in Simon Pokagon is one example of Native peoples reengaging with their pasts as an effective way to enhance individual and community identity while resisting the continued onslaught of non-Native influences upon indigenous cultures. It reflects an effort by some Native peoples to mark, reestablish, and assert the uniqueness of the community's history and practices and the importance of that legacy to its future. It has the potential to promote and perpetuate the sovereign status of American Indian tribes within the boundaries of the United States, by rewriting a history of dispossession with a narrative of pride and survival. It is about the ways memory and history are constructed and employed.

The Life of Simon Pokagon

Simon Pokagon was a member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, an author, and an advocate for American Indians. Born in 1830 near what later became the small village of Bertrand in southwestern Michigan, he died from pneumonia on January 28, 1899 near Hartford, Michigan.¹⁷¹ As noted above, Pokagon was a son of his tribe's patriarch, Leopold Pokagon. Dubbed by some "the Indian Longfellow" and "The Red Bard" Pokagon was often called the "Hereditary and Last Chief" of the tribe by the press,¹⁷² a title he did not reject. After receiving a formal education, he returned to his tribe in 1850, marrying and settling into community life. After the deaths of his two

¹⁷¹ Buechner, 327. "Will Bury Pokagon Today," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan 30, 1899, 7.

¹⁷² David A. Dickason, "Chief Simon Pokagon, the Indian Longfellow," *The Indiana Magazine of History*, 57 (June, 1961):127-140; "Prose Idyll By Red Bard," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 7, 1899, 35; "Death Notice of Simon Pokagon," *South Bend Tribune*, Jan. 28, 1899. "The story of Chief Simon Pokagon's life, if correctly written, would make one of the most interesting, as well as one of the most thrilling and pathetic tales to be told in all Indian history." In the appendix to *Queen of the Woods* are several other obituaries for Simon Pokagon from the Chicago press. The cover of the magazine that printed Pokagon's "The Future of the Red Man" describes him as the "Last Chief of the Pottawattamie Pokagon Band." Simon Pokagon, "The Future of the Red Man" *The Forum*, ed. J.M. Rice (New York: The Forum Publishing Company, August 1897).

brothers, he was elected leader of his community.¹⁷³ In his efforts to collect monies due the tribe pursuant to the land cessions of the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, Pokagon twice visited President Abraham Lincoln and after the Civil War met with President Ulysses S. Grant, accepting an expression of gratitude from Grant for the Potawatomi volunteers who had served in the Civil War.¹⁷⁴

The Bureau of American Ethnology provided an early description of the man in its 1910 *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*. The Handbook was long considered a major academic resource, and the passage bears long quotation. Although riddled with errors, it nonetheless sheds light on his public persona.

Simon was 10 years of age when his father died, and on reaching his 14th year was sent to school at Notre Dame, Ind. for 3 years; then, encouraged by his mother in his desire for education, attended Oberlin College, Ohio, for a year and next went to Twinsburg, Ohio where he remained 2 years. It is said that he was educated for the priesthood, spoke four or five languages, and bore the reputation of being the best educated full-blood Indian of his time. He wrote numerous articles for the leading magazines and delivered many addresses of merit during the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1899 he published in book form "Ogi maw kwe Mitigwaki "Queen of the Woods," an account of the wooing of his first wife, and at the World's Fair in Chicago, in 1893, "The Red Man's Greeting," a booklet of birch-bark. He was a poet, and the last of his verses, both in its English and Potawatomi versions, appeared in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, Jan 23, 1899, just before his death. Pokagon was credited with ably managing the affairs of his 300 tribesman scattered through Michigan and inspired by enlightened views, was the means of promoting their welfare...He was a man of sturdy character, unostentatious in manner, of simple habit, and a consistent Catholic. [Actually, he broke from the Church when he married his second wife who was a divorcee, and Pokagon was denied burial in a Catholic cemetery].¹⁷⁵ A monument has

¹⁷³ Buechner, 318.

¹⁷⁴ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 7-9. Pokagon was able to secure, according to him, a partial payment of \$39,000.00 in 1866. However, the balance of \$150,000.00 was not paid until 1896 after an appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

¹⁷⁵ "Pokagon In A Pauper's Grave," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan 31, 1899, 2. According to the article, "The funeral of Simon Pokagon at Hartford today was a sad disappointment to his people. Upon inquiry of Father Joos, Bishop Foley of the Diocese of Detroit dispatched word that the body of the Pottawatomie Chief could not be buried in a Catholic cemetery, and neither could the services be held in the Catholic

been erected by the citizens of Chicago in Jackson Park to the memory of Simon and his father. [Actually it never was].¹⁷⁶

By the 1890's Simon was somewhat of a national celebrity. That he merited an entry in the Handbook is but one indication of his visibility. An interest in Simon Pokagon as an American Indian intellectual, leader, writer, orator, temperance advocate, and environmentalist has remained relatively consistent since his death at the end of the nineteenth century (See Appendix 3.1).

Pokagon himself was a prolific writer. Besides *Queen of the Woods*, Pokagon's numerous other writings included birch bark booklets and articles to national literary magazines of the day. (See Appendix 3.2). *Queen of the Woods* was also converted, by Pokagon's publisher, into a theatrical production after his death.¹⁷⁷ The volume and visibility of his writings and presence on the national stage are reflected in a broadside for *Queen of the Woods* - typical of the promotion surrounding Pokagon¹⁷⁸ (See Appendix 3.3).

Church, because the chief's second wife was a divorced woman. It was the wish of the tribe that Pokagon's body be placed in the cemetery with other members of his tribe."

¹⁷⁶ Cyrus Thomas, "Pokagon, Simon," Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1910), 274-275.

¹⁷⁷ *The New York Times*, May, 5, 1904, 1, "O-Gi'-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki' Big Chief's Poem Has Been Dramatized and Will Be Played." The article continues, "CHICAGO, May 4 - The late Chief Pokagon's poem, 'O-gi-maw-kwe mit-i-gwa-ki, the Queen of the Woods,' has been dramatized by C. H. Engle of Hartford, Mich., and will have its 'first production on any stage' at Watervliet, in the home State of the dead Pottawattamie chief next Wednesday night. Pokagon's work is a poem of love and lamentation. The old fellow was lamenting all his life, and there is the chief's word for it that love for the queen of the woods kept pace with his sorrowings over the wrongs of his race." In the published play, C. H. Engle makes clear that he, Engle, is the author. He makes no such inference in the original novel. "Indian Drama ... 'Queen of the Woods,'" Dramatized and published by C. H. Engle (Hartford, MI: Day Spring Power Presses, 1904).

¹⁷⁸ After his death, his son Charles Pokagon sent copies of *Queen of the Woods* to notables including the President of the Chicago Board of Education. "Prose Idyll By Red Bard," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 7, 1899, 35, the Queen of the Netherlands and the wife of President McKinley. "Van Schaack Gives to Queen," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jul 15, 1900, 4. The article includes details that reflect the importance of the materiality of the special volumes provided. "Bound in Indian Style - These two were wonderful books, superb specimens of the bookbinders' art, bound in 'wighassi-makak-wig-wass,' or birch bark. The boxes in which they were inclosed (sic) were the best efforts of the Pottawatomie tribe's most skillful workmen. They were made of porcupine quills, bound together with small cedar roots - 'gijik-ens-obchi-biki.' They

Where Pokagon was educated remains something of a mystery. He claimed attendance at Notre Dame University and Oberlin College, but that has been challenged, as the schools have no record of his matriculation.¹⁷⁹ It appears more likely that he was educated by the Sisters of St Mary's Academy near Notre Dame and at the Twinsburg (Ohio) Institute.¹⁸⁰ Although claims of fluency in four of the "classic" European languages may be suspect because of his limited schooling, he nonetheless appears to have been a talented author and an entertaining and persuasive orator given his popularity as a public speaker.¹⁸¹

Pokagon was always welcomed among the Gold Coast "High Society" of Chicago and the Chautauqua literary and "Friends of Indians" groups nationwide.¹⁸² He was also the subject of many photographs and portraits. He was an early activist for the fair treatment of Indian peoples. Yet, he was a complicated individual with what often seemed to be contradictory motivations. For example, while he devoted his efforts to lobbying on behalf of his community for land claims, treaty rights and annuity payments, he also sold "interests" in that Chicago land claim to non-tribal members, angering some

were tied with 'wo-gop' strings, and the mats in the bottoms of the boxes were bordered with 'wish-mas-kus-sin,' a grass used by the Indians for its fragrance," Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Bernd C. Peyer, *The Thinking Indian, Native American Writers, 1850's-1920's* (Frankfort: Peter Lang, 2007), 149 and fn. 26.

¹⁸⁰ James A. Clifton, "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar Claim to the Chicago Lakefront," *Michigan History Magazine* (Sept/Oct. 1987), 14. 1987, 13; A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, "Simon Pokagon, (1830 – January 1899)," in *Dictionary of Native American Literature*, ed., Andrew Wiget, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, vol. 1815 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994), 277-279, 277; Lawrence T. Martin, "Simon Pokagon: Charlatan or Authentic Spokesman for the 19th-Century Anishinaabeg?" *Papers of the 29th Algonquin Conference*, ed. David H. Pentland (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1998) 29:182-191,185; Peyer, 149. Available from the Oberlin College Archives is correspondence from both Oberlin College (dated 1959) and Notre Dame University (dated 1972) indicating that neither school has a record of Simon's enrollment at their respective institutions. Oberlin College Archives, Group 28/1, Alumni – non grad files, Simon Pokagon folder, Box 203.

¹⁸¹ Peyer, 149. For a partial list of his public appearances, see Buechner, 340.

¹⁸² Clifton "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar: Potawatomi Claims to Chicago's Lakefront," 12-13.

in the Pokagon tribal community and costing him much Potawatomi support.¹⁸³ A quitclaim deed appears to confirm this allegation¹⁸⁴ (See Appendix 3.4). He made an unsuccessful claim with the federal government for personal fees from an 1895 treaty payment.¹⁸⁵ In fact, almost ten years earlier, in a letter to Joseph Labadie, dated October 23, 1888, Pokagon included a receipt for a loan that makes clear that repayment was to be accomplished by including his non-Native benefactor in an upcoming treaty settlement payment by the government -- to tribal members.¹⁸⁶

Received of Francis Labadie \$250 paid for J. A. Labadie (a member of my band) as a donation to assist me in defraying expenses to secure the Indian payment in which the said Labadie is to share. Yours, Simon Pokagon, Chief¹⁸⁷

Pokagon was certainly no champion of maintaining the integrity of tribal membership rolls, the concern for citizenship status or the equitable distribution of tribal monies with other tribal members. Nonetheless, he presented a positive facade to outsiders. Wrote one contemporary biographer:

His life was not eventful in the ordinary sense of Indian chieftains, and his fame rests upon the wonderful example which he offered the possibilities of advancement of the Red race in the lines of civilization. Born at a time when all the Indian habits of mind and thought and life were still in full force and vigor, he was able to emerge from these environments and to turn his face and influence towards a different form of life and destiny. He

¹⁸³ Clifton, *The Pokagons*, 1683 - 1983, 97. However, a contemporary account had a different take on the reasons for Pokagon's fall from grace among tribal members. "(Pokagon) spent many of the best years of his life in trying to collect a Pottawatomie claim of \$100,000 from the government, and he lived long enough to see it distributed among his people – and to get their ill-will because he did not procure more for them after they had drank and gambled that away. The almost utter isolation of the old chief, who was far above the abject specimens of his tribe to whom he devoted so much of his energy, appealed strongly to all who knew him." "Death of Chief Pokagon," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan 29, 1899, 30.

¹⁸⁴ An individual by the name of Jody Skrtic contacted this author in 2009 and provided a copy of a Quit Claim deed bearing the signature of Simon Pokagon and purporting to transfer claim of ownership to a part of the Chicago Lakefront to a William H. Cox, dated April 5, 1897. Pokagon signed the document on behalf of "himself and as the chief of the Indian tribe of Pottawattomies." Reference to this deed is also made in Peyer, fn. 33.

¹⁸⁵ Great Lakes Branch of the National Archives, Folder 81 – Simon Pokagon letters.

¹⁸⁶ Joseph Labadie Papers, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

was enabled at an early age to see the great advantage and necessity of laying aside the implements of war and the chase to turn to the cultivation of the soil and the procurement of permanent homes: and it was in this line that he always directed the minds of his people. Otherwise he plainly saw the speedy ending of his race.¹⁸⁸

In many of his writings, Simon played to national expectations and wrote nostalgically of the past, lamenting the passing of a “vanishing” race of Indians.

The index finger of the past and present is pointing to the future, showing more conclusively that by the middle of the next century all Indian reservations and tribal relations will have passed away. Then our people will begin to scatter; and the result will be a general mixing up of the races. Through intermarriage, the blood of our people, like the waters that flow into the great ocean, will be forever lost in the dominant race; and generations yet unborn will read in history of the red men of the forest, and inquire, “Where are they?”¹⁸⁹

However, as he well knew, the Pokagon Potawatomi were not vanishing. Intermarriage did not portend the end of the Potawatomi – kinship had long been more important than blood quantum in determining community membership. Pokagon's references to a disappearing people may have been a strategic move by him to garner sympathy and support from outsiders. In fact, by this time the Potawatomi had organized a Business Committee, a traditional, democratically elected tribal council, which governed by consensus and advocated for the rights of tribal members.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, most tribal members worked as laborers in local factories and on farms and retained ties to the Catholic Church.¹⁹¹ According to historian Susan Sleeper-Smith, the Pokagon Potawatomi, as a community, responded to Nativist hysterias against Catholicism during this era by turning inward and presenting a more Indian, and less Catholic, façade.

¹⁸⁸ Edward Livingston Taylor, “Monuments to Historical Indian Chiefs,” *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* vol. 11, Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society/Fred J. Heer (1903): 1-29, 23.

¹⁸⁹ Pokagon, “The Future of the Red Man,” 708.

¹⁹⁰ Clifton, *The Pokagons*, 1683-1983, 92.

¹⁹¹ Taylor, 116.

Sleeper-Smith also points out that the neighboring Miami Indians in Indiana chose another strategy and presented facades of whiteness in response to the racialization of “Indianness,” and proceeded to “hide in plain view.”¹⁹² In many ways, Simon Pokagon seems to have vacillated between these two strategies throughout his adult life and during much of his time in Chicago.

If he sometimes met national expectations, at other times he challenged the status of American Indians in the United States. In a publication originally titled *Red Man's Rebuke* and subsequently re-titled *Red Man's Greeting*, Simon wrote in harsh terms:

On behalf of my people, the American Indians, I hereby declare to you, the pale-faced race that has usurped our lands and homes, that we have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair now being held in this Chicago city, the wonder of the world. No; sooner would we hold the high joy day over the graves of our departed than to celebrate our own funeral, the discovery of America. And while . . . your hearts in admiration rejoice over the beauty and grandeur of this young republic and you say, 'behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land,' do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of our homes and a once happy race.¹⁹³

While these words place him as a spokesperson of resistance on behalf of American Indian peoples, his speech at the World's Columbian Exposition on "Chicago Day" reported in the October 4, 1893 edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* renders a much more conciliatory tone:

I shall cherish as long as I live the cheering words that have been spoken to me here by the ladies, friends of my race; it has strengthened and

¹⁹² Sleeper-Smith, 112-116. According to Sleeper-Smith, "Increasingly, the Pokagon Potawatomi withdrew into their own separate community – they became publicly more Indian and less Catholic. Ironically, it was probably that withdrawal from the larger Catholic community and from the institutional structure of the Catholic Church that preserved their distinctive Potawatomi traditions and rituals." Ibid, 112.

¹⁹³ *The Red Man's Rebuke by Chief Pokagon (Pottawattamie Chief)*. It was subsequently reprinted with a new title that same year as Simon Pokagon, *The Red Man's Greeting* (Hartford, MI: C.H. Engle Publisher, 1893). The little booklet, printed on birch bark paper is relatively scarce, but it has been reprinted several times. According to the contemporary press, *The Red Man's Rebuke* occupied "a prominent place in the Michigan exhibit" at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. "Poem by an Indian Chief," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 4, 1893, 9.

encouraged me; I have greater faith in the success of the remaining few of my people than ever before. I now realize the hand of the Great Spirit is open in our behalf; already he has thrown his great search light upon the vault of heaven, and Christian men and women are reading there in characters of fire well understood; 'The red man is your brother, and God is the father of all.'¹⁹⁴

Four years later, during celebrations of the founding of Holland, Michigan, Pokagon was again a featured speaker. There, he continued a common theme lamenting the passing of the Indian and appealing for reconciliation between the races.

Our people who sleep beneath your soil came here from the coast of the Atlantic. They were pioneers in their time, as you are today. When they first entered those beautiful woodland plains, they said in their hearts: 'we are surely on the border land of the happy hunting beyond.' I pray you do not covet the narrow ground they occupy and desecrate and hide their last resting place. For the good of yourselves your children you had better erect some simple monument over their remains and engrave thereon: 'an unknown red man lies buried here.'¹⁹⁵

With the understanding that his remarks were often reported in the popular press, it is not surprising that Pokagon spoke in the racialized terms of the dominant culture of the day. As John M. Coward has noted, the othering of American Indians by the press of Pokagon's time was a function of the ideology and hegemonic discourse of the era. The press did not transmit "new" news but rather confirmed what was already expected.

...news about Indians was created, organized and received in ways that supported Euro-American ideas and challenged or ignored native ones...Social actors, (such as Indians) who deviate from social norms...are punished or degraded by the media. By creating and organizing the news based on dominant values and assumptions...the media has ideological power – the power to define the terms of everyday life. Indian representation in the papers helped create and confirm a social order as well as a racial hierarchy... Indians were explained in the press ethnocentrically; that is, not by their own standards ... but by those of the press and its readers. The editors and correspondents in the field usually emphasized familiar and romantic and savage Indian identities by relying on a conventional set of Indian myths, stories and images...that met the

¹⁹⁴ "Pokagon The Poet," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 4, 1893, 1.

¹⁹⁵ "Held By The Dutch," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug 26, 1897, 5.

'civilized' public's expectations and progressive ideas...The press turned actual Native Americans into ideologically useful Indians, flexible but potent symbols by which Americans could measure themselves as well as the progress of their civilization.¹⁹⁶

Anyone who would paint Pokagon as “a docile Indian” should take note that he also “talked back to civilization,” as Frederick J. Hoxie has termed it.¹⁹⁷ In the second half of the 19th century, the discourse in America changed from the imperative to “civilize” the Indian to proof of the racial inferiority of Indians.¹⁹⁸ Pokagon challenged this ideological turn with his own counter-hegemonic discourse.

The Literature of Simon Pokagon

The birch bark booklet *The Red Man's Greeting*, sold by Pokagon on the Midway Plaisance during the World’s Columbian Exposition, garnered him much publicity.

Years later, a book collector wrote,

Today every book dealer and antique shop proprietor in Southwestern Michigan is searching for these little booklets to satisfy the demands of their customers... From the publication of the booklet until the end of the Fair, Simon Pokagon and his brethren were recognized. Indeed, Pokagon was lionized and won a fame that was to endure for years after that event ... After the closing of the Fair, Pokagon found that he had become a celebrity. He was much in demand both as a speaker and writer. From this time until his death in 1899, he contributed articles to the magazines *Arena*, *Forum*, *Chautauquan*, *Harper’s Review of Reviews*, and to a number of newspapers.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian, Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-90* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 9-12.

¹⁹⁷ Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization, Indian Voices from the Progressive Era*, The Bedford Series in History and Culture (New York: Bedford/ St. Martin’s Press, 2001).

¹⁹⁸ Sleeper-Smith, 139. See also Mona Domosh, “A ‘civilized commerce: gender, ‘race’ and empire at the 1893 Chicago Exposition,” *Cultural Geographies* vol. 9 (2002): 181-201.

¹⁹⁹ John Cumming. “Pokagon’s Birch Bark Books,” *The American Book Collector*, ed. and pub. William B. Thorsen, vol. 18 (Chicago: 1968):14- 17, 15.

Despite common assertions by the press, Pokagon was neither the last nor the hereditary chief of the Potawatomi.²⁰⁰ The Pokagons have had chiefs since his passing, and leadership in Potawatomi tribes is not hereditary. He headed the Business Committee of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians from 1869 until his political fortunes soured and he was removed in 1882.²⁰¹ Nonetheless, to readers of Native American literature and to tribal members alike, he remains an ambivalent representative of an early Indian who obtained "celebrity" status. One example of his ongoing connection to Chicago is an article by Pokagon in *Harper's Magazine* of 1899 on the taking of Fort Dearborn in 1812 by the Potawatomi. Simon Pokagon was not present at the battle; however, he retells traditional tribal accounts of the attack. The article, titled "The Massacre of Fort Dearborn at Chicago—Gathered from the Traditions of the Indian Tribes engaged in the Massacre, and from the published Accounts," reflects his desire to contribute to a fuller understanding of the early history of Chicago.²⁰² In it, he gives a strong rebuttal to the notion that members of the "civilized" world behaved more humanely than "Indian Savages" during the wars fought to expel the Indians from their lands.

They who call themselves civilized cry out against the treachery and cruelty of savages, yet the English generals formed a league with Tecumseh and his warriors, at the beginning of the war of 1812, with a full understanding that they were to take the forts around the Great Lakes, regardless of consequences. The massacre of the Fort Dearborn garrison was but one link in the chain of civilized warfare, deliberately planned and

²⁰⁰ Some newspapers took to calling Simon the last Chief of the Pokagon Potawatomi because after 1866, the tribe governed by Business Committee rather than council and the head of the Committee was designated the Chair rather than Chief. However, many subsequent Chairmen continued to call themselves, or be identified as Chief, including Simon Pokagon's son Charles. The Pokagon Potawatomi, like most Algonquin tribes, did not determine leadership by ancestry. There was no hereditary right to being Chief. Rather, leaders were selected based upon the consensus of tribal members. James Clifton points out that after 1866, the roles of Principal Chief and Chairman of the Business Committee were often indistinct. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 92.

²⁰¹ Peyer, 150-151, Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683 - 1983*, 95-98.

²⁰² Simon Pokagon "Massacre at Fort Dearborn at Chicago," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* vol. 98 (1899): 649-656.

executed. Disguise the fact as the pride of the white man may, when he joins hands with untutored savages in warfare he is a worse savage than they.²⁰³

In 1899, Pokagon wrote and published his only novel, *Queen of the Woods*. C.H. Engle states in the preface to the novel that Pokagon wanted the book to be published in Hartford, Michigan so that it would be “circulated among the white people where we have lived and are well known”²⁰⁴ Multiple audiences, native and non-native, were intended. As the publisher of *Queen of the Woods* notes, “His (Pokagon's) greatest desire in publishing the historical sketch of his life has been that the white man and the red man might be brought into closer sympathy with each other.”²⁰⁵

Authorship of *Queen of the Woods*

Some have doubted the authenticity of the novel, including some Pokagon Tribal members and academics; some of these have based their doubts on the few letters we have of Pokagon’s and the scant evidence of his purported education.²⁰⁶ Curiously, the subtitle, *Queen of the Woods*, had been used a half century earlier as a title for a poem published in *Graham’s Magazine*.²⁰⁷ Some have suggested that the ghostwriter of *Queen of the Woods* was in fact Sarah Engle, the wife of Pokagon’s publisher, C. H. Engle.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, Preface, ii

²⁰⁵ Ibid, i. Simon Pokagon was not the only tribal member to publish a book before World War II. DA-MACK (John D. Williams) who was a plaintiff in the tribe’s lawsuit for the Chicago Lakefront also was an author. DA-MACK (John D. Williams), *The American Indian and His Origin* (Benton Harbor, MI: C.A. Spradling, Pub., 1933). A copy is in the Michael Williams papers.

²⁰⁶ See for instance Parker, 48.

²⁰⁷ L Incommce, “The Queen of the Woods, My Lida”, *Grahams Magazine* vol. 36 (January to June, 1850).

²⁰⁸ As mentioned previously, James A. Clifton was perhaps the strongest voice questioning the authorship of *Queen of the Woods*. See Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998) and *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*. Clifton wrote that it was Pokagon’s attorney’s wife who “was the most likely ‘ghost writer’ of what he calls a “cloying romantic frontier fantasy.” See also Clifton, *The Pokagon, 1683-1983*, 104. Clifton echoes this sentiment in Clifton, “*Simon Pokagon’s Sandbar Claim to the Chicago Lakefront*,” 14. However, even Clifton appears to have been willing to reconsider the issue according to a personal communication cited in a 1999 dissertation. Tracey Sue Jordan, *Braving New Worlds: Breed Fictions, Mixedblood Identities*, Ph.D.

His letters, available in the Chicago History Museum, the Newberry Library, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and the Great Lakes Branch of the National Archives, and a reprint of one available in the contemporary magazine *The Arena*, reveal a man who was clearly able to write.²⁰⁹ A letter to the President of the Chicago Historical Society is typical of both his writing style and his desire to leave a legacy for future Chicagoans.

Secretary of Chicago Historical Society

Dear Sir: I notice in the Chicago Tribune of Sunday that the surviving infant of Fort Dearborn is still alive – I recall that my father was a chief at that time. I take pleasure in presenting you a copy of my “Red Mans Greeting” printed on birch bark which I wrote in the years of the World’s fair –

Perhaps you will recall I rode in the Float of 1812 on Chicago Day and was permitted to ring the Liberty Bell in the morning and make a short address.

I am getting to be an old man and wish to leave this greeting with you that it may be read by future generations.

I heard my father say many times before and after he was converted to Christianity if there had been no whiskey, there would had been no Fort Dearborn massacre – I shall write of our side of that sad affair during this winter – hoping this little book will be read with the same spirit in which is sent I remain yours truly.

[signed] S. Pokagon
Hartford Mich Dec 29 1896 - Box 32²¹⁰

dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 1999), fn. 13. Everett Claspy quoted Michael B. Williams, then Chair of the Pokagon Potawatomi Tribal Business Committee for the opinion that Cyrus Engle’s wife did much of the writing of *Queen of the Woods*. Everett Claspy, *The Potawatomi Indians of Southwestern Michigan*, 23. Others who weighed in on whether Simon Pokagon was the author of *Queen of the Woods* include A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, “Simon Pokagon, (1830 – January 1899), 277-279; Wolfgang Hochbruck, “Between Victorian Tract and Native American Novel: Simon Pokagon's Ogi-mäw-kwe Mit-i-gwä-ki (1899),” ed. Naila Clerici, *Victorian Brand, Indian Brand: the White Shadow on the Native Image*, Torino: Il Segnalibro, (1993):13 -29; Lawrence T. Martin, “Simon Pokagon: Charlatan or Authentic Spokesman for the 19th-Century Anishinaabeg?” *Papers of the 29th Algonquin Conference*, ed. David H. Pentland. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1998), 29: 182-191 and Parker, *The Invention of Native American Literature*, 48. A website devoted to Native American authors hosted by Drexel University repeats the assertion by Clifton that “his autobiography was largely a work of fiction written by the wife of his personal attorney.” <http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/A85> (accessed December 10, 2010).

²⁰⁹ B.O. Flowers, “An Interesting Representative of a Vanishing Race,” *The Arena* vol. 16 (Boston, The Arena Publishing Company, 1896): 240-250.

²¹⁰ Correspondence to the Secretary of the Chicago Historical Society – Simon Pokagon Collection, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL.

As a later writer noted,

It may be gratuitous to point out, also that in putting *Queen of the Woods* and his other manuscripts in order for the publisher, Pokagon doubtless had considerable editorial assistance. His handwritten letters which remain show a certain unconcern for the niceties of spelling and punctuation; and the syntax of some of his published work is not beyond reproach...But many otherwise able authors have shown some deficiency in verbal mechanics; and in view of the unusual background from which Pokagon wrote, a syntactical criticism here would be picayune.²¹¹

According to C. H. Engle, another reason for Simon Pokagon's publishing in Hartford included the fear that some whites might doubt his ability to pen the novel, deny the truth of its narrative, "or perhaps even deny its authorship."²¹² In his essay, *Burbank Among the Indians*, artist E. A. Burbank wrote that Pokagon's autobiography (presumably *Queen of the Woods*) was started by Simon and finished by his son, Charles.

When I went to paint his portrait, I drove over to his farm where I found him planting seed in the old way by walking and casting the seed on the ground. I told him of my errand, that I wished to paint his portrait. He asked how much I would pay him, and when I told him two dollars for six hours' sitting, with rest period, he refused, saying that when he worked for the government he was paid three dollars a day. He got the amount he wanted.

I told him I wanted to paint him in his Indian clothes. He said he had no Indian clothes. So I painted him as he was dressed when I met him, in his working clothes.

When it was time for him to rest he would go outdoors and read. I asked him what he was reading. He replied, "Latin." He had studied to be a priest and could read both Latin and Greek. At other times when he was resting he would be talking to some bird. He would say, "Good morning, little bird. I understand what you are saying. You are saying, 'Good morning, Pokagon.'" So I say good morning to you."

²¹¹ Dickason, 129.

²¹² Ibid, ii. The denial of authorship was a concern about Pokagon alone. For instance, in his history of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan, the Ottawa author Andrew J. Blackbird included the names of nine non-Natives who attested to his "reliability." Andrew J. Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan; a grammar of their language, and personal and family history* (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Ypsilanti Job Printing House, 1887), 4

He made me a present of a little book printed on birch bark and entitled, "The Plea of the Red Man." It was beautifully written. He also gave me a copy of an article on temperance, which he had written. In the article he wrote, "I cannot understand a people who can build a boat that will cross the ocean in safety and comfort, and yet cannot stop this liquor traffic." I also met Chief Pokagon's wife, a fine old lady. She made Indian baskets, some of which I bought. Their son, Charlie, whose acquaintance I made, lived with them. I stopped with a farmer close to their home.

Pokagon told me so much about his life and about his father and the Potawatami Indians that I told him it was his duty to write a book on his life. He replied that it would be a big job.

When I had finished his portrait and was ready to leave, I hired him to take me back to the town where I was to take passage on the boat to Chicago. As we arrived in the town (I think New Haven), I prevailed upon him to go in a store and buy the paper on which to write the story. He did so, and also promised to come and see me in Chicago. But within a few days after I had finished his portrait and bade him good-by, he passed away. He died in January, 1898. He had begun his life story and his son, Charlie, finished it after his death.²¹³

Simon Pokagon actually died the following year, on January 28, 1899, so he could have had sufficient time to write the short novel/autobiography with or without the help of his son Charles. Even if the rest of Burbank's narrative is correct, it appears *Queen of the Woods* was the product of Pokagon and his son Charles rather than non-family members. Another possibility, I have not seen argued, is that if indeed his publisher's wife transcribed the work, it would fit within the tradition of "as-told-to" autobiographies

²¹³ E. A. Burbank, *Burbank Among the Indians: As Told By Ernest Royce* (New York: The Caxton Printers, 1944), Figure 90. The painting by Burbank is in the Ayers Collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago. The text accompanying the portrait explains, "In 1898 Pokagon's last portrait was painted, at the request of the Field Museum, by E. A. Burbank. It shows us the old chief's face weakened by age, but full of character, radiant with interest, direct and noble in its gaze, gentle and friendly in its general expression." According to Cecelia E. Buechner, "A portrait that represented him (Pokagon) as he looked in his home during the last summer of his life was painted by E. A. Burbank for the Field Museum and a duplicate for the Ayer's Room of Indian History in the Newberry Library in Chicago, at the request of Edward E. Ayer, the donor." Buechner, 32-33.

such as *Black Elk Speaks*²¹⁴ and others and deserves consideration as the work and voice of Pokagon rather than the transcriber.²¹⁵



Fig 3.1: Sketch of Simon Pokagon by E. A. Burbank (1898)²¹⁶

Bernd C. Peyer also noted in his 2007 text, *The Thinking Indian, Native American Writers, 1850's – 1920's*, that several of Pokagon's biographers questioned Pokagon's authorship of *Queen of the Woods*.²¹⁷ However, Peyer ultimately concluded the best

²¹⁴Nicholas Black Elk (Author), John G. Neihardt (Collaborator), *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), first published in 1932.

²¹⁵Beginning in August of 2009, I began a correspondence with Kenneth Hakken, the great-grandson of C.H. Engle. He lives in Dunnellon, Florida and retains two copies of *Queen of the Woods*." In a September 20, 2009 email to me, he wrote, "I've read that some people believe that Cyrus had a large part in writing the book. I don't believe this. The story of the Osprey and the fish could only have been written by Simon. I think that Cyrus only helped him edit and publish the manuscript. All good authors have editors to help them organize. The story was all Simon."

²¹⁶http://www.harvarddiggins.org/Burbank/Burbank_Among_The_Indians/Burbank_Among_the_Indians.htm#_Toc83530925 (accessed February 16, 2010). The sketch is the basis for a painting of Pokagon by Burbank now in the Ayer Collection at the Newberry Library. According to a footnote, by publisher Engle in the appendix to *Queen of the Woods*, the Women's National Indian Rights Association rebuilt Pokagon's home after it was destroyed by fire in 1898. Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 230, note 1.

²¹⁷Peyer, footnotes, 40-44. Peyer and others have lamented the lack of a surviving manuscript to settle the speculation regarding the authorship issue. However, Bernadette Rigal-Cellard, who maintained a friendship with James Clifton, writes that Clifton told her that he had discovered a manuscript apparently written by Pokagon that alluded to the novel. She continues that Clifton told her that he was now subsequently of the opinion that Pokagon had at least written a draft of the publication. Rigal-Cellard also reports that A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff "knew of someone that has seen the manuscript." Bernadette Rigal-Cellard, "Simon Pokagon's O-gî-mäw-kwe Mit-i-gwä-kî (Queen of the Woods): A Deceptively Simple and Charming Romance of Love and Death in the Wild Woods," *Before Yesterday, The Long History of Native American Writing*, ed. Simone Pellerin (Pessac: Presses Universitaires De Bordeaux, 2009), 83 – 84. However, in a conversation with Brown Ruoff on March 24, 2011, she advised me that the hoped-for "manuscript" that she ultimately located was in fact a copy of the manuscript for the biography of Pokagon written by C. H. Engle for the preface of *Queen of the Woods* in the University of Michigan library.

evidence suggests the narrative to be essentially written by Simon Pokagon. Having read Pokagon's correspondence myself, it appears that he was more than capable of effective writing, although he may have had the assistance a family member as an editor.²¹⁸

In Craig Womack's work on Indian literary and intellectual traditions, he includes Simon Pokagon in his conclusions,

These are some of our ancestral voices, the pioneers, those who came before us whose writings paved the way for what Native authors can do today. Nineteenth-century Indian resistance did not merely take the form of plains warriors on horseback; Indian people authored books that often argued for Indian rights and criticized land theft. In addition to publishing books, many of these authors engaged in other rhetorical acts such as national speaking tours lobbying for Native rights. Their life stories, as well as their literary ideas, provide a useful study of the evolution of Native thought that has led up to contemporary notions of sovereignty and literature.²¹⁹

There is a substantial difference between ghostwriting and editorial assistance. If Simon Pokagon received editorial assistance, it makes *Queen of the Woods* no less his work. The evidence for lack of authorship is scant, and was only suggested decades after his death. As an early Indian author at a time when Indians were assumed incapable of literary ability, it may be that the denial of Pokagon's authorship results from a syndrome that Philip J. Deloria has characterized as one consequence of being an "Indian in an unexpected place."²²⁰ Whether intentional or not, those who have argued that Pokagon's work is inauthentic have run the risk of silencing a Native writer and his voice. The odds are in Pokagon's favor.

Queen of the Woods: Preserving Community Through Storytelling

The first time I held a copy of *Queen of the Woods* has left an imprint on me that

²¹⁸ See Appendix 3.5 for a copy of a handwritten letter by Pokagon.

²¹⁹ Womack, 2-3.

²²⁰ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

has never gone away,

Holding history in my hands, a portal to a shared past, time speaks to me through this book – its leaves, like worn and delicate sheets of birch bark - its talking pages pass on traditions as I turn them, as I fold the covers in to keep safe the lived experiences of then and now. This small book, a treasure, a memorial to my ancestors, a monument to the resiliency of a people, a tribe - ironically, unexpectedly, and eloquently, written by a man despised by some of his own people, yet embraced by the wealthy of his day. This man insinuated himself and his work into the high culture of America and there recorded our survival. Images and stories of a past I never knew, a title in a language I am ashamed I do not speak. I feel the slight heft of the book in my hands and wonder how many people have read its narrative of love, tragedy, redemption, and survival. How far has it traveled, before, like its author, it returned home?

It is a small book – and he was a man of small physical stature. The cover is burgundy faux Moroccan leather with gold gilt lettering, a mixture of the imitation with the real – replicating in some ways Simon Pokagon's life. A faded inscription inside indicates it was sold some decades ago by a Los Angeles rare books dealer. The bookseller attached a note inside the front cover.

This little book is rare, and has become a collector's item, but it has the fault of many such books, it is "poorly put together". This is not the fault of the author nor publisher, since his friend, Engle, published it after Pokagon's death.

There is an irony in the book being a collector's item, as Pokagon died penniless. Where did the book go from there? Did it end up on a bookshelf, in an attic, or box? One day, through an online auction, I retrieve it. Now I hold it, ponder its existence, and listen for the memories it holds within.

Like Pierre Nora's sites of memory, structures of community appear within the text of *Queen of the Woods*. Nora was the first to identify "sites of memory" as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community..."²²¹ They are fabricated and help us to remember our past. They are manifestations of the history we wish to remember. They include places such as museums, archives, palaces, cathedrals, cemeteries, and commemorative monuments;

²²¹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25.

concepts and practices such as commemorations, mottos, and rituals; and objects such as inherited property, manuals, emblems, texts, and symbols.

The publisher's notes to *Queen of the Woods* include a review of Simon's Pokagon's life, his attendance at the World's Columbian Exposition, his work on behalf of his people, notable historical events such as his visiting Presidents Lincoln and Grant, and meeting with Mayor Carter Harrison of Chicago on behalf of the Tribe, and the publication of several of his booklets on birch bark. Republished from a local Chicago paper of the day is a review.

(O)n sale at the American Indian village on the Midway is a little booklet with its leaves and cover made of birch bark. It was written by Simon Pokagon. Its title is 'The Red Man's Greeting.' ...No one can read it without realizing the other side of the Indian Question.²²²

Among friends and foes alike, few argued in 1899 for a multicultural respect for Indian peoples and cultures. The "question" most often debated, condensed into the "Indian problem," was whether Indians were capable of improvement, civilization and assimilation or a just a lost cause. Given that these were the two alternatives being discussed, Pokagon advocated for the education and improvement of his people in lieu of abandonment. This made him very popular among the non-Native Chicagoans who saw themselves as a liberal and enlightened elite. Even in the parlors at Chicago's Palmer House Hotel, he spoke to the propriety of giving the educated Indians of the race an opportunity to attend the World's Columbian Exposition and hold a congress of their own. To this group of "Gold Coast Dames," Pokagon argued that Indians were men, not the savages caricatured by the war whoops and battle dances performed daily on the Midway Plaisance.

²²² Reprinted in Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 11.

Queen of the Woods concludes with an enumeration of Pokagon's many writings, a commentary on his humble character, and the note that he was called "the red-skin bard, the Longfellow of his race, and the grand old man".²²³ Of the two-hundred and sixty pages of the 1899 edition of *Queen of the Woods*, somewhat less than two hundred were written by Pokagon, the rest are preface, publisher notes, images, and appendices. Plates after the notes show two images of Pokagon. According to the publisher, the first, a painting, is a representation as he appeared on Chicago Day.²²⁴ Dressed in what appears to be native clothing with an eagle feather bonnet, it is contradicted by the photographs and other descriptions at the time.²²⁵ The headdress is not appropriate to the Great Lakes tribes, and seems to have been the result of artist license. On the facing page is a photographic image of Pokagon, dressed in a suit tie with a ribbon boutonnière, as he appeared at the 50th anniversary of the founding of the city of Holland, Michigan.²²⁶ In conversation with each other, the images convey a theme of *Queen of the Woods* – that Pokagon was, like few others, a cultural broker able to bridge the worlds of the Native and the non-Native in Chicago and elsewhere like few others. Seeing an Indian dressed like any other Midwestern businessman, one suspects, must have come as a surprise to readers expecting a more "rustic" persona. Together, the images suggest that the author could don whichever identity he preferred – "savage" or "civilized." The ability to cloak

²²³ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 33.

²²⁴ Ibid, unnumbered, following 33.

²²⁵ See for instance the photograph of Simon Pokagon ringing the Liberty Bell on Chicago Day at the Exposition. "The Vanishing White City, A Series of Beautiful and Artistic Views of the Great Columbian Exposition," *Columbian Art Series* vol. 1, no. 12 (Chicago: Peacock Publishing Company, March 21, 1894).

²²⁶ Ibid, unnumbered, following 33. That photo is also used for the 2007 edition of Bernd C. Peyer's "*The Thinking Indian*," *Native American Writers, 1850's – 1920's*.

himself in multiple identities seemed easy and fluid. “Situational identities,” as Michael Witgen terms them, had a long history among Great Lakes Indians.²²⁷

Queen of the Woods begins with Simon’s return from Twinsburg (Ohio) Academy where he has attended school for several years.²²⁸ During the course of his adventures, Simon meets up with his friend Bertrand. They go hunting and fishing, and head north to an abandoned *wigwam*.²²⁹ While there, Simon makes a birch bark canoe and wears a birch bark cap.²³⁰ *Wigwas* and structures of birch bark figure significantly in the storyline – when Pokagon returns to find his beloved Lonidaw, he comes to her wigwam, and they plan a visit to an old man at his *tipi*.²³¹ Before leaving, they take a birch bark box filled with salt for the elder.²³² He describes the old man’s home as a round stockade, about sixteen feet across the base and twelve feet high; the posts leaned inward, leaving ‘paw-kwe-ne’ (a smoke-hole) at the top.”²³³ Birch bark boxes ‘wig-was-si ma-kak-ogons (small white birch-bark boxes) also figured in the teachings of an Ottawa elder named Ash-taw.²³⁴

Wigwams and lodges appear frequently in the narrative as *home* and are material evidence of lived experience. When Simon and Lonidaw marry, he travels to the wigwam of his bride.²³⁵ Together they built their new home, a wigwam constructed of bark and poles. There they kept their birch canoe for fishing and gathering wild rice.²³⁶ Years later,

²²⁷ Michael Witgen, “The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America,” *Ethnohistory* vol. 54 no.4 (2007): 641.

²²⁸ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 49.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 52,

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 64-65.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 116, 128.

²³² *Ibid*, 123.

²³³ *Ibid*, 128.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 160.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 163.

on the day before their son Olondaw leaves for school, Lonidaw dreams of the wigwam of her youth.²³⁷ Three years later the young man returns to their wigwam a drunkard. The drowning of their daughter Hazeleye, when her birch canoe capsizes, exacerbates the tragedy of their son returning as an alcoholic.²³⁸ Lonidaw was almost lost too, when she tried to save her daughter from the water and Simon is only able to carry his barely breathing wife back to their wigwam.²³⁹ Lonidaw dies from grief as Simon wanders the trail to the wigwam and watches the fireflies gathering to guide his wife to her spirit home.²⁴⁰ Later he passes their formerly happy home/wigwam but is unable to enter.²⁴¹ When a storm comes, he retreats to the home. “Quickly springing to my feet, I rushed into the wigwam to avoid the storm without, only to arouse the slumbering storm of sorrow in my soul.”²⁴² Simon pours out all his sorrow to God in that same wigwam.²⁴³

These tragedies, and remembering his commitment to his dying wife to fight against alcohol for the rest of his life, give Pokagon the incentive to carry on. “I am broken down by loss, care and anxiety, feeling (like) the wigwam of my soul is unlocked; that the latch-string has been pulled; that life’s latch has been lifted, leaving the door ajar.”²⁴⁴ In deciding what to do, and whether to give up, he asks “...shall I go forth out of the wigwam to join ‘nos-sog’ (my fathers) and ‘nin-gog’ (my mothers) to the land beyond; yet I am determined, while crossing the “threshold of life’s open door” that he will battle the demon of alcohol that has a chokehold on his race. In *Queen of the Woods*, wigwams represent structures of youth, leisure, adventure, marriage, family, happiness,

²³⁷ Ibid, 170.

²³⁸ Ibid, 175-178.

²³⁹ Ibid, 178.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 189.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 184.

²⁴² Ibid, 188.

²⁴³ Ibid, 190.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 198.

trouble, the soul, passages, and containers of memories both good and bad. They convey to the reader a sense of who Potawatomi people are and how they have lived in the past. The invocation of the Potawatomi language into the text of *Queen of the Woods* does the same work. Such references that touch upon memories have the ability to remind the reader that a civilized people occupied Chicago long before the coming of non-Natives. This is particularly important because Pokagon argues at the end of his novel for reconciliation between Natives and non-Natives, as well as the inclusion of Indian peoples in the mainstream of the non-Native world.

As Womack suggested above, Pokagon did not limit his rhetoric to his literature. About a year before publication of *Queen of the Woods*, Pokagon spoke at the Liberty, Indiana Hall of the Improved Order of Red Men (IORM), a non-Native fraternal organization, dedicated to memorializing the American Indian, at least in imagery and faux ceremonies.²⁴⁵ At one time a flourishing organization, the IORM was organized throughout the United States, and represented a peculiar 19th century interactive memorial to Indians in its own way. Held at the Gem Opera House on January 7, 1898, Pokagon lectured to the assembly of non-Natives. Quick to remark on the state of “the vanishing Indian,” Pokagon nonetheless also admonished the IORM members that evening:

Historians have recorded of us that we are vindictive and cruel, because we fought like tigers when our homes were invaded and we were being pushed toward the setting sun. When white men pillaged and burned our villages and slaughtered our families, they called it honorable warfare; but when we retaliated, they called it butchery and murder...But let Pokagon

²⁴⁵ Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). According to Deloria, Indians of this era sometimes “(donned) a literary headdress” that allowed them the opportunity to pursue their own agendas while meeting the expectations of their non-Native audiences. 126.

ask, in all that is sacred and dear to mankind, why should the red man be measured by one standard and the white man by another?²⁴⁶



Fig 3.2: Improved Order of Red Men (IORM) post card depicting a wigwam - circa 1900 ²⁴⁷

In his remarks at the IORM meeting in Liberty, Indiana, Pokagon noted that churches, schoolhouses, cottages and castles, had replaced the cabins and wigwams of his youth.²⁴⁸

Throughout his speaking and writing career Simon Pokagon made clear the conviction that while Indians were “different” they were no less civilized. While we have no direct evidence, it is fair to speculate that Simon Pokagon made similar arguments for the humanity of Indian peoples while speaking in the clubs and parlors of Chicago. In fact, in 1902, the Improved order of Red Men opened a chapter in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago and named it the “Pokagon Tribe No. 158” after presumably Simon Pokagon.²⁴⁹

Early in his essay on the Algonquin language in *Queen of the Woods* Pokagon laments the loss of the Potawatomi language by Indian children and notes that the text of the novel was first written in the Algonquin language before being translated to

²⁴⁶ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, Appendix, 224-225.

²⁴⁷ From the collection of the author.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 223.

²⁴⁹ *The Illinois Red Man* vol. 1, no. 1(Bloomington: Official Paper of the Great Council of Illinois Imp. O.R.M., October, 1902): 7.

English.²⁵⁰ He explained the reason for leaving some of the former in the text. “I have retained such Indian words and expressions in ‘Queen of the Woods,’ as monuments along the way....”²⁵¹ His use of such language, like his use of birch bark to wrap his early essays, and his obvious pride in Potawatomi traditional material culture, support his argument that the Potawatomi deserved better than ossification and marginalization. *Queen of the Woods* closes with a section devoted to the skill and artistry of Indian women in working birch bark and black ash into baskets and other items for the tourist trade.²⁵² In the preface to *Queen of the Woods* is a poem, presumably by Pokagon, that also emphasizes the intersections of materiality and community.

Is not the red man’s wigwam home
As dear to him as costly dome?
Is not his loved ones’ smile as bright
As the dear ones of the man that’s white?

Freedom – this selfsame freedom you adore –
Bade him defend his violated shore

The sacredness, authenticity, and power of language in *Queen of the Woods* are apparent. The frequent references to birch bark as both building material and structure of habitation point to the rhetoric of construction and the reinforcing of community. *Queen of the Woods* is a language lesson, a Victorian melodrama, and a temperance tract; but it is also a story of home, and of the construction of family and identity in a manner that could allow Indians to be different yet recognizable to a predominately non-Native society.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 35.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 36.

²⁵² Ibid, 254.

²⁵³ Temperance was not only a concern of Victorian society and such national organizations as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). American Indian prophets including Neolin, Handsome Lake, and Tenskwata had also admonished their followers regarding the debilitating effects of alcohol on Native communities. In that regard then, Pokagon continues this tradition of temperance advocacy.

Reading Imbedded Meanings

Simon Pokagon's work, like all narratives, is a series of texts and subtexts. While the text of *Queen of the Woods* might now be viewed as an embarrassing lamentation on the future for Indians, Lucy Maddox argues that these kinds of "performances" by Native intellectuals must be read within their historical context.²⁵⁴ It can also be argued that the subtext is also a plea for pity, itself a convention of Neshnabek rhetoric,²⁵⁵ and a prodding of the conscience of the Nation to treat their brethren humanely. Pokagon's many references to an iconic material of the Indian (birch bark) and the emphasis in *Queen of the Woods* on the Algonquin language provides a text of Native authenticity, while the subtext is one of materiality and humanity. The debate over the future of Indians – whether they are hopelessly primitive savages or are capable of assimilation into the dominant culture – is another text of *Queen of the Woods*, while the subtext is one of persistence and survival. Pokagon's references to hostilities between Natives and settlers provides a text that "we were no more savage than you" while the subtext can be read as "this was our land and we had a right to defend it." The many references to Pokagon's attendance at the World's Columbian Exposition provide a text that says it was only fair to include the original inhabitants of Chicago in the festivities. The subtext is that "Indians are Americans too and entitled to the same rights, opportunities, and privileges as others." Lastly, the extensive collection of reprinted obituaries of Simon

²⁵⁴ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 4-5.

²⁵⁵ Richard White notes that expectations of reciprocity and "the ritual Algonquin language designed to evoke pity and generosity" was a part of the mutual misunderstandings prevalent in interactions between Great Lakes Indians and non-Natives early on. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 96.

included in the appendix to *Queen of the Woods* signals the importance of Simon Pokagon as a man worthy of memorial.

What do Potawatomi peoples, who, according to their oral histories, are descendants of builders of great monuments, the mound builders, do when the mounds and earthworks have been flattened and planted, when the landscape has been unrecognizably altered in their lifetimes? Where does “the wisdom sit”²⁵⁶ when the countryside is remade into small agrarian farms, the forest is clear-cut, and the wetlands drained?²⁵⁷ For instance, in Berrien County, Michigan, the location of Leopold Pokagon’s village in 1833, half of the original eighty-seven lakes were drained to make arable land by the end of the 19th century.²⁵⁸ Ironically, two of the lakes drained had been named after the Potawatomi. Pottawatomie Lake, located in what is now New Buffalo Township, at one time three miles long and a mile wide, and Topenebee’s Lake, in Bertrand Township. Subsequently they were filled and used as farm fields by the descendants of settler families.²⁵⁹ William Cronon describes the events that took place at the mouth of the Chicago region after the arrival of settlers. Profound changes in the physical, cultural, political, and social landscape occurred throughout the ancestral lands of the Pokagon Potawatomi.

Chicago is a curiously disembodied place, isolated from its natural landscape much as its inhabitants are isolated from each other... (N)atural

²⁵⁶ Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits In Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

²⁵⁷ George R. Fox, “Place Names of Berrien County,” *Michigan History Magazine* vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1924): 6-35.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Sleeper-Smith writes, “The landscape evidence ... has not been incorporated into Great Lakes Indian history. Instead, historians have relied on the rather scornful letters of settlers and territorial officials who conveyed the impression that agriculture was a part-time endeavor, with Indian women tending small household gardens rather than cultivated fields.” Sleeper-Smith, 83.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9, 34-35.

and cultural landscapes began to shade into and reshape one another. In that mutual reshaping the city's history begins.²⁶⁰

Pokagon expressed great dismay that this reshaping did not include the Potawatomi people. He wrote:

The cyclone of civilization rolled westward; the forests of untold centuries were swept away; streams dried up; lakes fell back from their ancient bounds; all our fathers once loved to gaze upon was destroyed, defaced, or marred, except the sun, moon and starry skies above, which the Great Spirit in his wisdom hung beyond their reach. Still on storm cloud rolled, while before its lightning and thunder the beasts of the field and fowls of the air withered like grass before the lame – were shot for love of power to kill alone, and left, the spoil upon the plains. Their bleaching bones, now scattered far and near, in shame declare the wanton cruelty of pale-faced men. The storm, unsatisfied on land, swept our lakes and streams, while before its clouds of hooks, nets of glistening spears, the fish vanished from our shores like the morning dew before the rising sun. Thus our inheritance was cut off, and we were driven and scattered as sheep before the wolves.²⁶¹

In 2006, the Missaukee Earthworks in Michigan were identified as a three-dimensional monument, created by the indigenous inhabitants of the era, to record and celebrate “Bear’s journey” in delivering the Midewiwin set of spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices to the people.²⁶² Prior to contact with Europeans, this was a site extensively traveled to by regional residents. After contact, the ability to travel to the earthworks was disrupted and the indigenous peoples of the area responded by recording the story of Bears journey on birch bark scrolls.²⁶³ From storytelling to mounds, birch bark scrolls, from books printed on birch bark to books constructed like others of the

²⁶⁰ William Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1992), 16.

²⁶¹ Pokagon, *The Red Man's Greeting*, reprinted in Buechner, 331-337.

²⁶² Meghan C. L. Howey and John M. O'Shea, “Bear’s Journey and the Study of Ritual in Archaeology,” *American Antiquity* vol. 71, no. 2 (Apr., 2006): 261-282.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 274-276.

dominant culture – each was a logical progression of some of the ways in which Potawatomi history and memories have been preserved and passed on.²⁶⁴

Conclusion

We might view landscapes as documents that are written upon, and written over, by subsequent inhabitants. The landscape can be a story that both consciously, and unconsciously, conveys what is important to a people. Monuments form chapters in that story. They have overt, covert, and alternate readings as they espouse, advocate, attest, contest, bear witness, and write/rewrite history.²⁶⁵ Like the mound builders before him, Pokagon was an architect building structures of community – in his writings. As its author struggled with the impulses to be both proudly Indian and to hide in plain view, his *Queen of the Woods* presented a public and positive image of what it was to *be* Indian. It also articulated the hurdles facing the Potawatomi, and challenged their exclusion from the rest of American society. Simon Pokagon’s writing down of what he thought was an important story had historical precedent; he continued the tradition of transferring memories and memorials of monumental size; transforming them into narratives capable of being carried and shared as opportunity allowed. The stories imbedded in the mounds of the ancestors were supplanted with birch bark scrolls inscribed with the history and origins of the people. Leather bound books replaced birch bark scrolls as the medium. *Queen of the Woods* is the sharing of tradition and knowledge in response to changes in the social, political, cultural, and physical landscapes of America.

²⁶⁴ It is clear that not just Indians thought of the Mounds as monuments. The early work by Squier and Davis conveys this in its very title. E. G. Squier and Edwin Davis, *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, originally publication 1848 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Press, 1998 edition).

²⁶⁵ Chris Wilson & Paul Groth, ed. *Everyday American, Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 86-91, 103.

Today, Simon Pokagon's picture hangs in many of the tribal offices of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, including the Tribal Council Chambers. *Queen of the Woods* was republished by the Pokagon Potawatomi tribal council in 2008. It is unknown how many tribal members have read the new edition, yet its republication indicates the Pokagon Potawatomi community is embracing its prodigal son as it repositions itself on the social, political, and cultural map of the United States. Pokagon Potawatomi Indian identity is not only about community and pride. It is also about political status, rights and entitlements, access to legal and public forums, and qualification for certain privileges and benefits accorded to groups who are able to protect and promote their legal standing and uniqueness. The original publication of *Queen of the Woods* in 1899 reflected the use of the prevalent method of communication of the dominant culture and taking it captive, adopting it, and indigenizing it, before returning it back to the mainstream for consideration, and its republication reflects a continued effort to do the same as well as a renewed pride in the novel itself. This is not to suggest that all Pokagon Potawatomi view Simon Pokagon and his literature in a favorable light or that maintaining a distinctly Indian identity is particularly important to them. However, these beliefs are held by a significant proportion of the community.



Fig 3.3: Detail from the Foster Avenue Bricolage ²⁶⁶

The Pokagon Potawatomi never accepted the new world forced upon them passively. Through a combination of written and spoken word, joined with the symbolism of material culture, Simon Pokagon restored to ancestral lands a familiarity that reminded Natives and non-Natives alike that American Indians wished to participate in the social, political and culture milieu/maelstrom of America. This visibility proved that the Potawatomi were neither totally assimilated nor exterminated. Monuments proposed to honor Simon Pokagon in Chicago immediately after his death (for example, his proposed burial at Graceland Cemetery and a Jackson Park Statue) reflect his popularity in the City, yet they never came to pass.²⁶⁷ *Queen of the Woods* remains as his testimonial, and it is but one example of the attempts by Simon Pokagon to clear a space for the Pokagon Potawatomi to allow them to do much more than either withdraw from their non-Native neighbors in Chicago or just hide in plain view.

²⁶⁶ The image of Simon Pokagon is in the center row to the far right. To his left is an image of his father, Leopold Pokagon. Photograph by the author.

²⁶⁷ Discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

As evidence of Simon Pokagon's continued "presence" in Chicago, his image was included in a bricolage mural installed in 2009 at the Foster Avenue underpass of Lakeshore Drive in Chicago. In the next chapter, I will continue with a discussion of other forms of labor by Simon Pokagon and his progeny to remain in the collective memories of Chicagoans.

Chapter 4

The Politics of Monuments and Memorials for the Potawatomi in Chicago

Introduction

The decades of settlers cemented their memories of American Indians into ossified statues reflecting a celebration of conquest and nostalgia for a mythical past. These memorials and site names are so numerous that they signal an obsession with rendering Indians immobile; safely ensconced in metal or stone, and in place. There are landmarks honoring the Potawatomi throughout the areas where tribal members lived throughout their history (See Appendix 4.1). In this chapter, I review the significant monuments and memorials to the Potawatomi of Chicago. Non-Natives created many, some were created in collaboration with Native peoples, and Indians themselves created a few. Although capable of multiple readings, these markers reflect the fact that the Potawatomi and other Indians have remained in the collective memory of Chicagoans.

There is a profound narrative embedded in such monuments created by non-Natives for non-Natives. They reflect a pathos, guilt, and nostalgia for the disappearing, and now safe, Indian. They represent images of Natives in which non-Natives might find comfort and enjoyment, these monuments also allow us to see how non-Natives of the era were responding to, and thinking about, Indians. Such memorials represent a celebration of the victors over a “worthy adversary.” They began to appear with gathering frequency after 1890 and the assumed subjugation of the remaining Indian peoples within the boundaries of the Nation. No longer perceived as a threat, American Indians were

embraced as a part of the national patrimony now worthy of memorialization. According to Philip Deloria, the ideology of pacification that bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represented an affirmation of the sadly vanishing Indian trope and an expectation of Indian assimilation. Says Deloria, "(A)ll these things added up to either complete domination, with limitless access to Indian lives and cultures, or complete freedom to ignore Indian people altogether."²⁶⁸

Monuments and Memorials

Any memory device, including books, can serve as a memorial and the physical manifestation as a monument. As discussed in Chapter 3, Pokagon's writings served as a set of rhetorical signposts for a people's status as distinct and autonomous Americans: Native Americans in a land of immigrants, to be sure, but also neither exterminated nor assimilated in total, neither savage nor noble, neither politically excluded nor co-opted. Memorials and monuments to the Potawatomi dot the landscape surrounding Chicago. The Potawatomi called the greater Chicago region their home from the 17th century until they were forcibly removed in the late 1830s. Prior to removal, some of the Potawatomi lived in the Fox Valley area of Illinois, near Chicago, during the summers and wintered in southern Illinois. To honor the legacy of the Potawatomi people, a statue was erected in Pottawatomie Park in St. Charles, Illinois in 1915. Vandalism during the 1960s damaged the statue beyond repair and it had to be removed. In the 1980s, a new statue dedicated to the memory of the Potawatomi was sculpted by Guy Bellaver and erected by the community on the same site. The fifteen foot bronze statue stands looking westward over the Fox River.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 50.

²⁶⁹ <http://www.stcharleslibrary.org/history/ekwabet.htm> (accessed January 19, 2011).

Dedicated on May 22, 1988, the statue cost an estimated \$90,000. Members of four bands of Potawatomi were invited to the dedication, including those from the Pokagon Band. A year later, the statue received its name.²⁷⁰ Potawatomi tribal members, believing that it was important to name the statue to give it a protective spirit - something that the 1915 statue did not have - named the statue *Ekwabet* or "watching over." According to at least one tribal member, it is modeled after Leopold Pokagon, the patriarch of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and Simon Pokagon's father.²⁷¹ Detailing a history of the Potawatomi in the Fox River Valley, the plaque for the statute reads in part,

By 1837, almost all of the Pottawatomi and kindred had been removed from Illinois. They stayed for a short period of time at Council Bluffs, Iowa and later moved to Missouri. When the Missouri location proved intolerable, some moved to eastern Kansas, while others made the long trek to upper Wisconsin and Michigan.

We owe the Pottawatomi of the Fox River Valley our gratitude and respect. Many a pioneer was sustained by them in hard times, and many an early settler was saved by them during the Black Hawk War. They were generally a peaceful race whose only wish was to co-exist with their new neighbors.

This sketch is, to be sure, brief and incomplete. However, it is fitting that we remember these first voices of the land and pass down a legacy to generations yet to come.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Dorothy DeWitte, "Ten Years Later, "Ekwabet" Still Watches Over St. Charles," *St. Charles Republican*, Nov. 19, 1998, 7.

²⁷¹ Richard E. (Mike) and Rachel (Rae) Daugherty were present at the dedication in 1988 and were consulted by the sculptor, according to their son, Kevin Daugherty. Kevin Daugherty, telephone interview by author, January 12, 2010.

²⁷² <http://siris-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?uri=full=3100001~!312913!0> (accessed January 19, 2010).



Fig. 4.1: “Ekwabet,” St. Charles, Illinois ²⁷³

Another statue dedicated to the memory of the Potawatomi is the memorial to Black Partridge. Sculpted by Carl Rohl-Smith in 1893, it depicts an image of Black Partridge saving a Mrs. Helm during what has come to be called “the Fort Dearborn Massacre.”²⁷⁴ Commissioned by the famous *captain of industry* G.W. Pullman of Pullman Railway Car wealth, he had it erected in front of his mansion at 18th St. and Prairie Avenue in Chicago. The statute was originally located near the site of the attack by Potawatomi warriors on a group of Americans fleeing Fort Dearborn in 1812. The plaque at the front of the Rohl-Smith’s sculpture describes the tableau.

Black Partridge, the Pottawattomie chief, saving Mrs. Helm from death by...tomahawk. At the back of the group Dr. Van Voorhees, the post surgeon (meets) his death...an Indian...thrusting a spear through his breast.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Photograph by the author.

²⁷⁴ Marion E. Gridley, *America’s Indian Statues* (Chicago: The Amerindian/ Towertown Press, 1966), 101.

²⁷⁵ “Marked by a Statue,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 18, 1892, 13.

The design comes from Juliette Magill Kinzie's account of the destruction of Fort Dearborn.²⁷⁶

On June 18, 1812, the United States had declared war against the Great Britain and its allies.²⁷⁷ Many Indians of the Great Lakes had already been engaged in a struggle against American expansion under the leadership of Tecumseh since 1811 and that conflict merged into the War of 1812.²⁷⁸ The Battle of Fort Dearborn occurred on August 15, 1812, near the mouth of the Chicago River. Indians allied with Great Britain were encouraged by the latter to engage in military actions with the United States. Fort Dearborn was ordered evacuated by the United States military. Fort Dearborn's commander, Captain Nathan Heald had negotiated with the surrounding Indians, mostly Potawatomi, for safe passage. In return, the Indians were promised the provisions in the fort, including all of the alcohol and ammunition. However, on the day of the evacuation, Heald reneged on the promise and destroyed the provisions, agitating the Potawatomi, who needed the gunpowder in particular for their weapons, not just for war, but also to hunt and provide for their families.²⁷⁹ As the garrison of soldiers and families commenced their evacuation, they were escorted by the Potawatomi to a point about a mile and a half south of the fort. There, near what is now 18th Street and Calumet Avenue, along the lakeshore, the Potawatomi attacked, killing most of the militia as well as two women and twelve children. During the battle, Captain Heald is reported to have attempted riding into the nearby Potawatomi village to reciprocate by killing women and

²⁷⁶ Mrs. John H. Kinzie, *Wau-bun, The Early Days in the North-West* (Chicago: Derby & Jackson, 1856); Juliette Augusta Kinzie, *Narrative of the Massacre at Chicago* (Chicago: Ellis & Fergus, 1844), reprint (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), 16.

²⁷⁷ Yale Law School online library, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/1812-01.asp (accessed November 20, 2010).

²⁷⁸ James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983, Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 38.

²⁷⁹ Jerry Crimmins, *Fort Dearborn* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 59.

children there, however he was killed before able to do so.²⁸⁰ The remaining non-Natives from the fort were taken prisoner and delivered to the British at Detroit. The fort was burned to the ground and the area remained free of U.S. citizens until after the war.²⁸¹ Simon Pokagon wrote his own version of the events of the Battle for Fort Dearborn and presented an Indian's perspective on the battle, noting the provocations by the United States that caused it.²⁸² Typical of the dominant narrative of the battle are the remarks of historian Milo M. Quaife,

For nine years the garrison of Fort Dearborn upheld the banner of civilization west of Lake Michigan – a tiny island engulfed in a sea of savagery. Then, as an incident in a world-wide convulsion, having its center four thousand miles away in distant Europe, garrison and community were blotted out, and the forces of barbarism again reigned supreme at Chicago.²⁸³

This memorial to Black Partridge is an example of "the good Indian," in contrast to his savage colleagues, and typifies the bifurcation of Indians into either noble or ignoble.

In 1896, magazine editor B. O. Flowers noted the irony of the installation of the Black Partridge statue in the then most expensive neighborhoods of Chicago by one of the wealthiest members of the upper class.²⁸⁴ The statue, which was moved sometime after the demographics of the neighborhood shifted from wealthy White to more recent migrant Black, was later housed in the rotunda of the Chicago History Society (now

²⁸⁰ "The Massacre at Chicago," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Frank Leslie's Publishing House, New York, vol. 10 (July to December 1880): 189-192.

²⁸¹ Milo M. Quaife, *Checagou, 1673-1835* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1933), 116-134; Lieutenant Linai T. Helm, *The Fort Dearborn Massacre with Letters and Narratives of Contemporary Interest*, ed. Nellie Kinzie Gordon (New York: Rand, McNally & Co., 1912).

²⁸² Simon Pokagon, "The Massacre of Fort Dearborn at Chicago. Gathered from the traditions of the Indian tribes engaged in the massacre, and from the published accounts," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* vol. 98, no. 586, (March, 1899): 649-656. See also the *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, "Fort Dearborn," available online at <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/477.html> (accessed November 20, 2010).

²⁸³ Quaife, 112. Similar examples of the casting of the Potawatomi as savages and villains are in Noble Canby, "Chicago of To-Day," *The Chautauquan* (Meadville, PA: AT.T.L. Flood Publishing, 1892): 324; "The Story of Old Fort Dearborn and its connection to with A Century of Progress International Exposition," (Chicago: Committee on "History of a Century of Progress," 1933).

²⁸⁴ B.O. Flowers, "An Interesting Representative of a Vanishing Race," *The Arena* vol. 16 (Boston: The Arena Publishing Co. 1896): 240-250. 240.



Fig 4.2: "Black Partridge Saving Mrs. Helm," aka "The Fort Dearborn Massacre Monument"²⁸⁵

Museum) and is now stored in a Chicago Park District Warehouse. The magazine editor of *The Arena* at the time, B.O. Flowers, provided a helpful description of the area.

“Mr. George M. Pullman’s stately mansion stands in the shade of the cottonwood tree, his conservatory is erected upon the battle-field... Within an area of five blocks forty of the sixty members of the Commercial Club have established their homes. Mr. Marshall Field and Mr. Phillip Armour live near together on the east side of the avenue a little further south. Probably there are as many millions of dollars to the square inch of this residential district as are to be found for any equal area on the world’s surface. It is the very Mecca of Mammon, the Olympus of the great gods of Chicago.”²⁸⁶

The mansions that surrounded that statue in 1893 were monuments as well - to conquest, power, and the unequal distribution of wealth - made possible through the rise of capitalism and industrialization.

A Celebration of Chicago’s Native Past

Simon Pokagon’s rhetoric, his determination to keep Chicagoans in mind of Potawatomi, was not limited to his writings. Public appearances were also a part of maintaining a Potawatomi presence in Chicago, and he often appears to have performed

²⁸⁵ From a postcard in the collection of the author.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 242. The ostentatious and conspicuous consumption of the era is well documented by the satirist Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994, first published in 1899).

as expected, most notably as a featured speaker at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (WCE) in Chicago. There he presented the Mayor of Chicago Carter H. Harrison, a facsimile of a deed to Chicago wrapped in birch bark. The Mayor got into the spirit of the festivities by emphasizing his own American Indian ancestry. According to one reporter,

Mayor Carter H. Harrison was an Indian yesterday as he rang the great Columbian Liberty Bell for Chicago day. At least he said he was descended from Pocahontas and the crowd cheered as the man of many nations made the utterance ... Before the Mayor made his address he was handed the treaty signed by the father of Chief Pokagon of the Pottawatomie tribe. It represented the transfer of 994,000 acres of land at 3 cents an acre, the money for which Chief Pokagon has not received. It was this fact that led the Mayor to reiterate his Indian genealogy.²⁸⁷

On the day designated as "Chicago Day," October 9, 1893, over 700,000 fairgoers crowded into the Exposition.²⁸⁸ The festivities included the noon ringing of the Liberty Bell by Pokagon,

"The venerable chieftain was not able to tug the clapper of the big bell and assistance had to be rendered. It was a double ringing, for on the opposite side of the bell from Chief Pokagon was a husky Indian warrior, decked in his war paint and eagle feathers. He was John Young, the Indian whose father is said to have named Chicago ... Thus it appears that the descendant of him who ceded the title to the site of Chicago and the son of the red man who gave the city its name celebrated together the anniversary and the glory of Chicago day at the Exposition.²⁸⁹

Among other Exposition activities, Pokagon served as an honorary umpire of an afternoon lacrosse game at the Stock Pavilion Amphitheater featuring Iroquois and Potawatomi players. Before the crowd on that day, Pokagon, dressed in a suit like most other white men around him, was distinguished by a feathered cap. A picture survives of

²⁸⁷ "Triumph of Peace," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1893, 9.

²⁸⁸ "Chicago's Great Day," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1893, 1. Chicago History Society website, Display Ad, "Official Chicago-Day Program," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 9, 1893, 1. <http://www.chicagohs.org/history/expo.html>. (accessed March 10, 2009).

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Simon from that day. (See Fig. 4.3). Although a small man, he appears dignified and at ease. In the press, he was described as quiet and self-possessed, with a “look of sadness in his face, showing...the weight of years...pressed into a moment of time.”²⁹⁰



Fig. 4.3: Simon Pokagon at the World's Columbian Exposition (1893) ²⁹¹

On that October morning, nearly 75,000 people crowded into Terminal Plaza at the fair to listen to the Indian man. During his speech, he railed against the evils of alcohol and its devastating effect upon Indians before concluding that his people needed to put aside their tribal allegiances in favor of US citizenship.

What can be done for the best good of...our race? Our children must learn that they owe allegiance to no clan or power on earth except these United States ... (they) must be educated and learn the...trades of the white men...(then) they will be able to compete with the dominant race.”²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Cornelia Steketee Hulst, *Indian Sketches, Père Marquette and The Last of the Pottawatomie Chiefs* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), 97; Simon Pokagon, *O-gi-maw-kwe mit-i-gwa-ki* (Queen of the Woods,) (Hartford, MI: C.H. Engle, 1899, 1901), 19.

²⁹¹ Simon Pokagon at the World's Columbian Exposition is to the far right. Next to him is Emma Sickels. To the right of Sickels is John Young, the other American Indian invited to the podium that day. Anonymous, “The Vanishing White City, A Series of Beautiful and Artistic Views of the Great Columbian Exposition,” *Columbian Art Series* vol. 1, no. 12 (Chicago: Peacock Publishing Company, March 21, 1894). Copyright 2007, John N. Low, use by permission only.

²⁹² “Triumph of Peace,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1893, 9.

Accompanying Pokagon during the day was the activist Emma Sickels.

According to an account of the day, "Tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock the original treaty which ceded the land on which Chicago now stands to the government will be placed in Mayor Harrison's hands by Miss Emma C. Sickels, the 'woman chief' of the Indians." Sickels headed the Fair's Indian Affairs Department before being dismissed for criticizing the treatment and representation of Indians at the Exposition. After her removal from administration at the WCE, Sickels served as chair of the Indian Committee of the Universal Peace Union, an organization that was critical of the manner in which Indians were represented at the Exposition.²⁹³ She had lobbied for Pokagon's inclusion in the Fair program and had written about the unfair treatment of Indians at residential boarding schools and against the taking of Indian lands through Indian Allotment Act of 1887 (Dawes Act).²⁹⁴ She also lobbied, along with Pokagon, unsuccessfully, for a congress of Indians to be held there.

... (t)here should be a full and complete delegation of North American Indians, who should have ample opportunity for presenting in their own behalf the... condition of their race in the development of their tribal existence and also in the line of modern thought and attainment.²⁹⁵

Pokagon had even presented Mayor Harrison with a request for two thousand dollars to help defray the costs of such a congress, arguing, "In making your people rich, we have become poor."²⁹⁶ Pokagon is quoted as writing to the mayor,

To His Honor the Mayor: I heard with pleasure that the blood of Pocahontas flows in your veins, and as one of my people I call upon you to help the educated Indians of our great country in their efforts to celebrate this great fair. Many of my people have already come, but have

²⁹³ "Ready For Crowds," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1893, Bernd Peyer, *The Thinking Indian: Native American Writers, 1850s-1920s* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), 161, and fn. 66. Sickels is sometimes spelled Sickles although the former appears to be the correct spelling.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 51.

²⁹⁵ "Work of the Women", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 10, 1892, 13.

²⁹⁶ "Chief Pokagon Wants An Even \$2, 000," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 15, 1893, 7.

found no place for them in the celebration. The land on which Chicago and the Fair stands still belongs to my people, as it has never been paid for. All we ask from Chicago is that the people help us to come and join our common country. We wish to talk for ourselves. The Pottawatomies have a message to deliver to the world...²⁹⁷

Nonetheless, the Congress was never organized. The assassination of Mayor Harrison on October 28 and the closing of the Exposition on October 30, 1893 intervened before any assembly of Indians could be organized.

Such a congress would have been a respite from the imagery of Native primitiveness and savagery evident on the Midway Plaisance. While Indians inside the Fairgrounds proper were being represented as capable of education,²⁹⁸ references to the encampment of Potawatomi on the Midway as “freaks” were yet another example of the bifurcation of Indians, this time rather than noble versus savage it was a division between those deemed capable of assimilation/civilization versus those not²⁹⁹ The Chicago WCE memorialized both dualities.

A Moving Memorial – Floats as Ephemeral Monuments

Pokagon would finish “Chicago Day” by riding as a special guest on the “History of Chicago” float with a replica of the Black Partridge statue.³⁰⁰ The float thus itself became a “moving” monument to the noble savage/savage uncivilized/civilized

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Robert A. Trennert, Jr., “Selling Indian Education at World’s Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904,” *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 11, no. 3, (Summer 1987): 204.

²⁹⁹ “Return as Freaks,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1893, 1.

³⁰⁰ G.L. Dybwad, and Joy V. Bliss, *Chicago Day at the World's Columbian Exposition: Illustrated With Candid Photographs* (Albuquerque: The Book Stops Here, 1997), 20. “Pokagon and his staff of warriors were in full tribal regalia, designed for the occasion from old pictures of Indian ceremonial attire. Pokagon held the original deed loaned by the war department, which he tendered to the United States officials, whose uniforms of buff and blue and tri-cornered hats made a striking contrast to the gorgeous colors of the Indian representatives from Michigan and Illinois. This tableau was the fourth float. Pokagon II, was there, nearly seventy years old.” See also “Voice of the People, A History Asks For Help,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1933, 16.

dichotomies in its own right. According to a news article preceding the event, Pokagon would be on this third float in the parade.

Third float – Chicago in 1812 – A Trading Post Massacre! – This float bears upon a high platform a group representing the famous Black Partridge in the act of rescuing a white woman from the savage Pottawatomie's tomahawk. This float will be furnished with Native American Indians of historical prominence, including the Pottawatomie Chief Simon Pokagon ... Three Cherokee maidens ... will form a graceful group and sing an Indian song, which will form an unique and authentic historical display.³⁰¹

Floats represent a special kind of ephemeral monument. Generally constructed for a specific event and use, they are not intended to be permanent. However, they work as monuments for their audience, presenting images that are often meant to celebrate and valorize significant events and individuals while communicating a theme that the viewer is intended to embrace. Pokagon's appearance on the float presumably reflected a juxtaposition of the savage Indians of Chicago's past with the civilized Indians of Chicago of the day. According to a *Chicago Daily Tribune* article about his inclusion in the parade, the newspaper noted,

... the chief interest will lie in one of the people on the float. He is the only man yet discovered who has seen the World's Fair and does not approve of it. Further, he is a royal personage – so royal in fact, that when he came to pay an unofficial visit to the Fair he travelled just as incog as the Archduke Franz Ferdinand von Verterreich d'Este. This old personage is Simon Pokagon, 70 years of age, Chief of the very Pottawatomie Indians who massacred the settlers in 1812 and in 1833 ceded to Uncle Sam the ground on which Chicago stands. But Chief Pokagon's title to fame does not rest upon his illustrious birth. In the vicinity of his residence, Hartford, Mich., he is known as the "Redskin poet."³⁰²

At one point, it was anticipated that Simon Pokagon would be buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago and that a monument would be erected in his honor in Jackson

³⁰¹ "Makeup of the Pageant," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 7, 1893, 1. Dybwad and Bliss, 23, 29, 49-51, 55, 58.

³⁰² "Pokagon the Poet," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 4, 1893, 1.

Park. Reference to the proposed monument is included in an Appendix to *Queen of the Woods* and described in a later biographical sketch.

The last hereditary chief of the Pottawattamies having died a few weeks ago, an organization has been formed in Chicago to erect a monument to his memory and to that of his father, Pokagon I... The new Indian monument will be erected in Jackson Park, where throngs of visitors may become as familiar with its story as they are with that of the Massacre Monument. The new monument will be erected in memory of the late Simon Pokagon, and will have inscribed upon it his own beautiful words to the children of Chicago, that 'the red man and white man are brothers, and God is the Father of all.' Surmounting the pedestal will be a superb statue of the regal figure of Pokagon I in full chieftain's attire. The four bas-reliefs on the pedestal will represent events in the history of Chicago's Indian days, which will be decided upon by a committee of pioneers. The names, also, of noted Pottawattamie chiefs who were at the head of bands under Pokagon will be inscribed upon the base of the monument... They have now practically passed away as a separate and distinct race and within a few years, as suggested by Simon Pokagon, the remnant which is left will be absorbed and swallowed up in the blood of the dominant race. That the tincture of their blood will flow on in that of the white race and possibly for its betterment is reasonably certain: but as a distinct race their end is comparatively near at hand.³⁰³

However, as noted in Chapter 3, Simon Pokagon was actually buried in a pauper's grave near Hartford, Michigan, and the proposed monument in Jackson Park was never erected.

The appendix to *Queen of the Woods* reads,

It is the wish of the few pioneers left that the closing hour on some one day of Chicago's school days every autumn may be set aside for Indian study, and called Pokagon Day... The Pokagon Monument Association numbers for its advisory committee and patrons the leading pioneers and prominent ladies and gentlemen of the city.³⁰⁴

The Potawatomi themselves were rarely consulted on what monuments they might appreciate. Civic leaders made those decisions. After all, these monuments were not for the Natives – but for the grandchildren of the immigrant-settlers.

³⁰³ Taylor, "Monuments to Historical Indian Chiefs," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* vol. 11, Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society/Fred J. Heer (1903): 1-31, 27-28. Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 232.

³⁰⁴ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 233.

Potawatomi Monuments

On occasion, the Potawatomi were included in the festivities for the unveiling of a monument. For instance, in Shipshewana, Indiana, not far from Chicago, Memorial Day, 1931 was proclaimed *Chief Shipshewana Day*. The Shipshewana, Indiana, Chamber of Commerce organized the event, which included the unveiling of a monument in the Chief's memory. According to a program from the event,

On the south side of the lake stands the monument which has been erected in the chieftain's honor, bearing the following inscription: 'In memory of Chief Shipshewana and his band of Pottawatomie Indians removed from this reservation Sept. 4, 1838, and escorted to Kansas by a company of soldiers. One year later the heart-broken chief was allowed to return to his old camping grounds on the banks of beautiful Shipshewana Lake where he died in 1841...'”³⁰⁵

Included on the program for that day were music and talk by Rev. Joe C. Pamp-to-pee, direct descendant of Chief Shipshewana, an address by Rev. Wm. Soney, Indian Orator, entitled “Attitude and Gratitude of the Indian Today.” That afternoon, a baseball game pitting the Elkhart, Indiana Giants vs. the “Shipshewana Indians” at 4 PM was also held. According to the day's program, “Mr. Dalby of South Bend will have his collection of Indian relics on display the entire day. A delegation of Indians from the reservation at Athens, Michigan, will be present.”³⁰⁶

These monuments that purport to honor the local Indians often reflected a darker message and imagination. Confessed one proponent of such memorials,

The few monuments that have been erected by white men to commemorate and perpetuate the names and virtues of worthy representatives of the Red race do not at all satisfy the obligations which rest upon us in that behalf...It would seem not only fitting but just that these chiefs and tribes, who were the original occupants and possessors of

³⁰⁵ *Program, Chief Shipshewana Day, Shipshewana Lake, Saturday, May 30, 1931* (Shipshewana, IN: Shipshewana Chamber of Commerce, 1931), 8-9.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

the soil, should have suitable and enduring monuments to commemorate their names place in public parks...so that our children and our children's children may have kept before them a recollection of a race of men who contended with us for more than two centuries for the possession of the country, but who have been vanquished and almost exterminated by our superior force.³⁰⁷

Memorials and monuments are enduring attempts to stabilize meaning and memory. Numerous statues are identified in Marion E. Gridley's *American Indian Statues*, which purports to be "A comprehensive compilation of facts and photos of statues honoring or memorializing the American Indian."³⁰⁸ Of course, many of the non-Native memorials to "the passing Indian" have not been so grand. Back in 1979 artist, Fritz Scholder published a photo collection of what he called *Indian Kitsch*.³⁰⁹ Scholder saw the souvenir stands and trinkets as a cultural pollution, by both Native and non-Native communities, of "authentic" Indian culture.³¹⁰ In retrospect, I think what Scholder documents is the impulse to commodify what had already been deemed conquered so that it could be appropriated for use in the marketplace.³¹¹

On the other hand, monuments created by Potawatomi – whether structures, writings, treaty claims, or objects of material culture – serve as monuments to confirm the continued existence of the Pokagon Band, both for tribal members *and* non-Indians. The idea that a text could also be a monument has support. James E. Young has noted the intersections between memory devices, such as books, memorials and monuments. A book can be a memorial, which can be physically manifested as a monument. Young

³⁰⁷ Taylor, 29.

³⁰⁸ Gridley, Introduction.

³⁰⁹ Fritz Scholder, *Indian Kitsch, The Use and Misuse of Indian Images, Photographs by Fritz Scholder* (Flagstaff: Northland Press/ Heard Museum, 1979).

³¹⁰ Ibid. The pages are unnumbered but he makes this assertion in his introductory essay to the book.

³¹¹ See Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) for an exploration into the many reasons why Non-Indians have been so fascinated with Indian imagery and iconography.

argues that many narratives serve as memorials. As such, the books of Pokagon do work as both memorial and monument.

... the first 'memorials' to the Holocaust period came not in stone, glass, or steel - but in narrative. The Yizkor Bikher - memorial books - remembered both the lives and destruction of European Jewish communities according to the most ancient of Jewish memorial media: words on paper. For a murdered people without graves, without even corpses to inter, these memorial books often came to serve as symbolic tombstones...³¹²

Ruth B. Phillips astutely captured the importance and the irony of Native peoples using natural materials and indigenous skills and technologies to create items of interest to tourists in her 1999 *Trading Identities, the Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900*.³¹³ Yet those items, made in response to changing subsistence patterns and a celebration of a retained sense of native community, were different from Simon Pokagon's birch bark booklets or his *Queen of the Woods* novel in that his were not anonymous. Pokagon affixed a name and a face to his monuments to the Pokagon Potawatomi. He contributed to a reshaping of an indigenous landscape that could be recognized by others. His novel, *Queen of the Woods*, is not merely a nostalgic, Victorian style romance novel but also a memorial and monument to the past and future of the Potawatomi people.

Monuments and memorials are an attempt to inscribe the landscape with a bookmark of sorts. Landscapes are like libraries; they reflect the hopes fears, aspirations and lived experiences of human interaction. Like books, spaces are subject to constructions of a multiplicity of meanings. How we understand and relate to both is ever changing. Placed upon the earth; their meanings are subjective and temporal. The irony is

³¹² James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials, and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 6-7.

³¹³ Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities, The Souvenir in Native North American Art form the Northeast, 1700 – 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press).

that no matter how heavy the monument, it never stands still. It mirrors the narratives and counter-narratives of the hegemon and the marginalized. Pokagon could leave signposts for future generations, but how they would be read always depends upon the era and the audience.

The Materiality of Potawatomi Monuments

Wigwas, known to botanists as *Betula papyrifera Marsh* and to gardeners today as paper or white birch, is a magnificent tree that grows in most of Canada, portions of the Northeast and most of the Great Lakes region. The Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi commonly utilized birch bark for housing. Ethnologist Frances Densmore began visiting the Ojibwe of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ontario in 1905 and concluded that their homes could be divided into four broad categories; “the wigwam, the peaked lodge, the bark house and the tipi.”³¹⁴ The material and design of their homes reflected their needs, creativity, and resources and the importance of birch bark to their very identities. The uses of wigwas reflect the traditions of the people through items of everyday and ceremonial life. Wigwas helps to define who the Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe are as peoples because they used birch bark so advantageously in much of their traditional daily lives. Birch bark connects to the origin and migration stories of these peoples; it serves in tradition as material for habitation, travel, storage, writing, and recording. Items made from birch bark are not only cultural artifacts but also represent just as much a process, a history, and a narrative of place, name and people. The people see in birch bark the characteristics they cherish in themselves: self-renewal, strength, adaptability, and dependability.

³¹⁴ Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979), first published in 1929, 22-27.

The utility of birch bark to the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi is obvious after considering its ubiquitous presence in daily community life.³¹⁵ Traditionally harvested without harm to the plant, the trees were a ready and self-renewing resource. Strong, pliable and available in huge sheets, wigwas was also used as material for sacred scrolls that recorded the ceremonies of the Midewiwin, a spiritual tradition of these tribes.

According to Patty Loew,

The Ojibwe carried the sacred scrolls associated with the Midewiwin (traditional religious ceremonies), the Ottawa organized hunts and organized trade, and the Potawatomi carried and tended the fires. Each responsibility was essential to the group's spiritual, cultural, and physical survival.³¹⁶

Many utilitarian items for the home and for subsistence were also made of birch bark, including the torches used in nighttime spearfishing;³¹⁷ grave houses;³¹⁸ birch bark containers (makuks) for gathering and storing berries, wild rice and storing, collecting and making maple sugar;³¹⁹ trumpet shaped moose calls; cups; dishes; trays; cases; and floats for fish nets.³²⁰ According to Thomas Vennum Jr., the Ojibwe also stored their food underground in birch bark containers. This was particularly the case with wild rice,

³¹⁵ Ibid, 89-90, 174.

³¹⁶ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin, Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 84. See also R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomi, Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 1-2 and William Duncan Strong, *The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region, With Special Reference to the Illinois and the Potawatomi*, leaflet 24 (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1926), 17.

³¹⁷ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 125.

³¹⁸ Ibid. Plate 30.

³¹⁹ Ibid. Plate 46, 64, 162. Densmore writes, "Among the Chippewa ... the birch-bark makuk answered the purpose of a general carrier ..."

³²⁰ Ibid. 40, 149, 154. In the 1960's amateur ethnologist Fred K. Blessing also documented and cataloged the many uses of birch bark by the Ojibwe of Minnesota and Wisconsin, including baby carriers, birdhouses, buckets for maple sap gathering, brimmed caps, cones for candy, drinking cups, curing rattles, torches, canoes, and housing. Fred K. Blessing, Jr., "The Ojibway Indians Observed, Papers of Fred K. Blessing Jr.," *On The Ojibway Indians From The Minnesota Archaeologist* (St. Paul: The Minnesota Archaeological Society, 1977). See also Frances Densmore, "Uses of Plants by the Chippewa Indians," in *Forty-fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1926-1927* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1928), 387-397.

a staple of their diet, which was ruined by exposure to moisture. Bags woven from the inner bark of cedar or birch bark called *makakoon* were used for such storage.³²¹

Pokagon explained why he chose to use birch bark for the booklet *The Red Man's Greeting* distributed at the WCE. Birch is not only indigenous and sacred; it is structural, relational, and memorial.

My object in publishing "The Red Man's Greeting" on the bark of the white birch tree is out of loyalty to my own people, and gratitude to the Great Spirit, who in his wisdom provided for our use for untold generations, this most remarkable tree with manifold bark used by us... Out of the bark of this wonderful tree were made hats, caps and dishes for domestic use, while our maidens tied with it the knot that sealed their marriage vow; wigwams were made of it, as well as large canoes that outrode the violent storms on lake and sea; it was also used for light and fuel at our war councils and spirit dances ... (like) the red man this tree is vanishing from our forests.³²²

In a review of *The Red Man's Greeting*, reprinted from the New York Globe, one critic opined:

This birch bark book will take its place in the cabinets of admirers of handsome books along with the carved leather bindings and illuminated text of the early German publishers; the heavy oaken-covered books of the first English works; the minute rice paper books of Chinese; the stone tablets of the Phoenicians, and the parchments of the Greeks, as the representative work of the nationality to which the author belongs. It abounds in all the rich metaphor and eloquence of the aboriginal race.³²³

Pokagon, literally wrapping several of his writings in wigwas, often evoked the language and life ways of pre-contact Potawatomi.

Simon Pokagon's wigwam and his writings are both monument and memorial.

Erected and written so that we will remember who first resided on this continent, they

³²¹ Thomas Vennum Jr., *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1988), 140.

³²² Flowers, 244, reprinting the preface to *The Red Man's Greeting*. The preface is also reprinted in Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, Appendix, 253.

³²³ *Ibid*, 251.

memorialize the passing of lifeways and of communities that were forever changed by contact with Euro-Americans. They are also monuments to new beginnings – to the potential of Indian peoples in the future of the Nation – and to the possibilities that could emerge from their inclusion. The power of Pokagon’s work lies, at least in part, in the way that it marks endings, and beginnings, and the passages between them.

The many structures Pokagon writes about in *Queen of the Woods* have been potent symbols of indigeneity in the United States for the last two hundred years. They have also been appropriated, like much other Indian material culture, as symbols of freedom, individuality, and proximity to nature, national patrimony, and American uniqueness – a process that started at least at the time of the Boston Tea Party and the dressing up as Indians by the colonists.³²⁴ Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha* takes place at the wigwam of Nokomis, (grandmother). A search of books on the website of a leading bookseller reveals 14,273 books with the title of “wigwam” in them.³²⁵ Typical are the sorts of books like *Indians of the Wigwams*³²⁶ and the novel by Cornelia Steketee Hulst, *Indian Sketches*, which depicts a wigwam on its cover.³²⁷ In fact, Abraham Lincoln was nominated Republican Party candidate for President in Chicago in 1860 at an auditorium called “The Wigwam.” A replica of *The Wigwam* was erected at the Century of Progress World’s Fair held in Chicago in 1933.

Simon Pokagon not only emphasized and reclaimed the wigwam, he also *built* a birch bark wigwam on the Midway at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. A

³²⁴ Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

³²⁵ www.amazon.com (accessed March 8, 2009).

³²⁶ Therese O. Deming and Edwin W. Deming, *Indians of the Wigwams, A Story of Indian Life* (Chicago: Junior Press Books/Albert Whitman & Co., 1938).

³²⁷ Another example is Mary Catherine Judd, *Wigwam Stories* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1917).

photograph from the *Grand Haven Evening Tribune* shows three such birch bark tipis on the Midway that year.



Fig. 4.4: Tipis at the WCE ³²⁸

Pokagon's birch bark tipi was subsequently re-erected at his Hartford, Michigan home. Upon his death in 1899, the tipi was removed to Hartford, Michigan to the front yard of his friend, attorney, and publisher Engle, where it was a tourist attraction for many years. Finally, in 1914, the tipi was sold to the Eastern Michigan Normal School, now Eastern Michigan University, in Ypsilanti, Michigan where it was displayed for at least a decade before it was packed away.³²⁹ In *The History of Van Buren County*, published in 1912, the author wrote,

On the preceding page is a picture of Chief Pokagon's last Wigwam. It stood for several years on the lawn of C.H. Engle, opposite the Hartford public park. It is a pyramidic decagon in shape, made of the manifold bark of the white birch tree, being sixteen feet at the base and twenty-four feet

³²⁸ *The Evening Tribune*, Grand Haven, Michigan, July 1893. http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.sandhillcity.com/indian%2520village%2520at%2520worlds%2520fair.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.sandhillcity.com/dbd_7_93.htm&usg=__OhyK95UkiTOzk9Gbo-0-IL8x2ic=&h=487&w=607&sz=91&hl=en&start=3&um=1&tbnid=dRKtDVnrfxT_4M:&tbnh=109&tbnw=136&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dchicago%2Bamerican%2Bindian%2Bvillage%26gbv%3D2%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26ie%3DUTF-8 (accessed March 15, 2009). According to the text accompanying the photograph, "The American Indian village at the fair opened Friday. The Indians are from the tribes of Pottowatomies, Chippewas and Winnebagos, in Northern Wisconsin and Minnesota."

³²⁹ Hulst, 88. Some of the publicity surrounding the installation of the tipi in Ypsilanti from the local press includes the following. "Get The Spirit, Get a Tag and Help Buy Pokagon's Wigwam", *Normal News*, May 25, 1911, 5; "Indian Tepee to be Dedicated Next Week on Normal Campus," *Ypsilanti Daily Press*, June 10, 1911, 1; "Dedicate Birch Wigwam, Granddaughter of Pottawatomie Chief in Costume will Officiate – Tepee to Remain on Campus as Permanent Feature, *Normal News*, June 15, 1911, 1; Tepee Dedicated With Fitting Exercises On The Normal Campus Thursday, *Ypsilanti Daily Press*, June 16, 1911, 1.

high. During the past summer it was procured by the advanced class of the study of nature at Ypsilanti, and now stands on the campus in front of the science building in the grounds of the State Normal School of Michigan.³³⁰

Pokagon's son Charles also built a birch bark tipi when he headed an encampment of Pokagon Potawatomi Indians on the Chicago Lakefront in 1901.³³¹ His granddaughter Julia re-erected her grandfather's tipi at the unveiling of the Chief Menominee Statue on September 4, 1909, at Twin Lakes, Indiana, near Chicago.³³²

The Memorialization of Chief Menominee

Menominee, who lived from 1791 to 1841, was the leader of a Band of Potawatomi Indians who were tricked into assembling at their church and then forcibly removed to Kansas under order of the Governor of the State of Indiana. The Chief Menominee monument, made of granite, and standing twenty feet tall, was unveiled by Julia Quigno Pokagon.³³³ Julia assisted Cecilia Buechner in writing her book *The Pokagons*. Julia married Michael Quigno, and she lived at Rush Lake in Michigan, until her death in 1945.³³⁴ Cornelia Hulst writes,

It is not known where Chief Menominee is buried. It is thought that he died on the way to Kansas, or shortly after his tribe reached the new reservation... (J)ust seventy-one years after Menominee and his people were carried captive from their homes, the State of Indiana raised a monument in his honor on the spot where his chapel had stood. It was a tardy recognition, but it does him justice and its inscription in granite will help to tell the future history... This granite figure does, indeed stand as a monument of humanity and appreciation of the courage, devotion, faith, and sorrows of the old chief whom men used spitefully, but it has a

³³⁰ Captain O. W. Roland, *A History of Van Buren County Michigan, A Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People, and its Principle Interests* vol. 1 (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 1-52, 12.

³³¹ Edward B. Clark, "Indian Encampment at Lincoln Park, Chicago, Sept. 26 to Oct. 1 1903," in *In Honor of the City's Centennial Anniversary* (Chicago: The Chicago Centennial Committee, 1903), 4.

³³² See Appendix 4.2 for images and related materials from the dedication ceremony.

³³³ Gridley, 23.

³³⁴ Everett Claspy, *The Potawatomi Indians of Southwestern Michigan* (Ann Arbor: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1966), 29.

larger aspect also. It is a voice from the present speaking to the future of an injustice done and repented, an appeal from the fathers who erected it to the sons who will follow...³³⁵

At the unveiling, Julia Pokagon said, "It will stand as a monument of humanity, teaching generations yet unborn that the white man and the red man are brothers and God is father of all."³³⁶ That passage is taken almost verbatim from the preface of her grandfather's *Queen of the Woods*, written sixteen years earlier.³³⁷

The wigwam erected by Julia Pokagon served as its own monument alongside the stone one put up by the non-Natives. As noted earlier in this chapter, the festivities included an address by Julia who unveiled the monument while a Band played "softly and slowly, 'The Dirge of a Vanished Race (Slumber Song of a Vanished Race)'."³³⁸ Following her speech was a historical address by Daniel McDonald, author of *The Potawatomi Removal from Northern Indiana*,³³⁹ and an address by then Tribal Chairman Michael Williams on "Civilization and the Indian Race."³⁴⁰

Several years later, Julia Pokagon continued the family tradition, using the opportunity available to her during monument dedications, in order to to articulate an agenda that confirmed the symbolic importance of the tipi/wigwam. She included a

³³⁵ Hulst, 73, 76.

³³⁶ Ibid, 74

³³⁷ Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods*, 13.

³³⁸ http://www.culver.lib.in.us/daniel_mcdonald.htm#indians (accessed February 5, 2009); "The First of Its Kind, Pottawattomie Monument at Twin Lakes Holds Unique Position in Country," *Culver Citizen*, Sept. 9, 1909, 1.

³³⁹ Daniel McDonald. *Removal of the Pottawattomie Indians from Northern Indiana* (Plymouth, Ind., D. McDonald & Co., 1899).

³⁴⁰ A copy of the program is available at <http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/indiana/chiefms.htm> (accessed March 8, 2009). McDonald, a representative in the Indiana legislature, delivered a speech promoting a bill to erect a monument to the Twin Lakes Potawatomi, on February 3, 1905. The monument was ultimately erected by the State and became the first monument to an Indian to be paid for by state funds. George S. Cottman, ed., "Address of the Pottawattomie Indians," *The Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History* vol. 1, Indianapolis: Indiana, (1905):160-161.

demand for respect as she spoke at the unveiling of her grandfather's tipi when it was installed in Ypsilanti in 1914.³⁴¹

I am glad that I am here; indeed that you have granted to a child of the forest an opportunity to address the teachers and students of the greatest institution of Michigan; am glad this college has honored my race by placing on these grounds the wigwam of my fathers. There is nothing more sacred to our people than 'wigwam.' It is as dear to our hearts as 'home' to the white race. It brings to us all the kindred ties of father, mother, sister, brother, son and daughter. We too can sing with overflowing hearts 'Wigwam, Sweet Wigwam: there is no place like Wigwam.'³⁴²

Julia continued,

About one year since I was honored, by making the unveiling address of an Indian statue (of Chief Menominee at Twin Lakes, Indiana) erected in memory of the unjust banishment of my people from the state of Indiana in 1838. As I there stood in the presence of a great multitude gathered to atone as far as possible for the wrongs their fathers had dealt out to our people through the influence of bad men, my heart mourned....³⁴³

Julia Pokagon did not perceive the earlier monument in Indiana as an honor to Chief Menominee, but rather as a marker of the wrongs done to the Potawatomi. The Potawatomi "read" these granite markers differently than do their non-Native neighbors but they served as message boards for them as well.

In the fall of 2009, a rededication of the Chief Menominee statue was held, and I availed myself of the opportunity to attend the public event. (See Appendix 4.4) My memories of that day provide one example of how audiences read the monuments for and by the Potawatomi in the past and present.

I am driving from Champaign, Illinois to Twin Lakes, Indiana, the car cuts through the center of the two states. Illinois, named after the peoples of the

³⁴¹ See Appendix 4.3 for images of the tipi/wigwam in Ypsilanti.

³⁴² Rowland, 12. A slightly different version of the address that appears to be a copy of the original typed speech is available from the Special Collections, Eastern Michigan University Library, Simon Pokagon folder, Ypsilanti: Michigan.

³⁴³ Rowland, 12.

Illini Confederacy with a French appendage, Indiana being a Greek reference to the lands of the Indians. The irony is that many of the original Indians were removed west out of both places in the 1830's.

The car moves past long, flat fields of soy and corn - another irony is that the landscape has been changed as much as the inhabitants have. Wetlands drained and controlled, forests clear-cut so that planted fields of cash crops extend to the horizon.

Traveling - Friday, September 18, 2009, to the "Chief Menominee 100th Anniversary Rededication Ceremony." A celebration of sorts - a commemoration of the dedication of the Chief Menominee statue that was erected by the State of Indiana in 1909. Originally an honoring of the Potawatomi chief; carved of granite, it is an engraved plea for forgiveness of the sin of ethnic cleansing and removal of the Potawatomi to places west - a process and policy that even by 1909 folks were uncomfortable with.

One hundred years ago, Julia Pokagon and Michael Williams, spokespeople from the Pokagon Potawatomi community - the closest Potawatomi to Twin Lakes - were invited to participate. In 2009, Potawatomi from Oklahoma and Kansas are in attendance. No Pokagon Potawatomi are here this day but me. The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi were not removed, and members of the tribe are this day more interested in upcoming fall ceremonies than statuary-centric events.

Most of those in attendance are non-Natives; children from the local elementary school, boy scouts, pastors, musicians, orators, politicians, and members of the Trail of Death Association - the latter folks putting signposts along the route that Chief Menominee and his Twin Lakes Band were forced to walk in 1838 during their removal.

The statue (missing some fingers and thumbs) is tall - and framed by the shining sun on a nearly cloudless day. Old oaks surround the park-like parcel of ground, and fields across the street gleam with soon to be harvested corn. The monument itself looks much as it does in the old photographs I have seen showing Julia Pokagon on that first dedication day. This white men's monument to their own bad behavior; is there pleasure in the pathos? Pokagon's *Red Man's Greeting* has been called *The Red Man's Book of Lamentations*. This statue to the memory of Chief Menominee is perhaps then the settlers' monument of lamentation.

The festivities continue with pomp and circumstance and conclude with an elderly pastor raising his arms to the sky and offering an

"Indian prayer." The Indians in attendance lay tobacco onto the earth near the monument and offer their own prayers in the old language.

An instructor from the nearby Culver Academy Preparatory School invites Eddie Joe Mitchell, a Prairie Band Potawatomi member from Kansas, to return later in the year to instruct the young students on the "real ways" of the Indian. Mitchell seems to take the request in stride and smiles slightly. "Indian ways" are now worthy of instruction to the descendants of settlers who saw no value in Indians or their ways. Eddie looks at me and it seems the irony is not lost on either of us. Nearby, George Godfrey, a Citizen Band Potawatomi, who before retirement taught entomology at the University of Illinois, is dressed as the Potawatomi of Indiana did in 1838, looking as though he has stepped out of a George Winter watercolor.

The non-native organizers of the event are dressed also in their imaginings of what the Potawatomi of the 1830's wore – lots of buckskin and beads - non-Natives, playing Indian in what appears to be a sincere attempt to honor those long-removed Twin Lakes Indians. Toward the end of the outdoor festivities a gathering of musicians sing odes to the good Chief Menominee in Gordon Lightfootesque seriousness. As dinnertime approaches, the gathered adjourn to the nearby Menominee Elementary School for a chili supper and a feel good moment - history is pain free so long as it has an aura of solemnity. Time helps heal the wounds and it is safe to remember the atrocity of the past.

I eat the chili and small talk with tablemates. However, I am left wondering about the erasure of the first dedication, the lack of reference to it and the missing remonstrations that Julia Pokagon voiced at the first dedication. Today, unlike the first dedication, there is no talk of bitterness or responsibility.

I am struck by the multiplicity of meanings that can be "read" from this monument. I leave feeling a sense of melancholy that there is for me no feeling of reconciliation. I suspect, however, that most leave feeling better for having celebrated the memory of a great Indian chief and the passing of his people and their ways. My angst butts against their nostalgia.

Back at the monument, all is quiet. The simulacrum of Chief Menominee stands silent and still, in repose, frozen in time. After the crowd has gone: who remembers, what do they remember, and why? I am reminded that the dominant culture and the Potawatomi each have their own ways of memorializing the past for future generations.

The power and wonder of monuments, memorials and commemorative events is that every audience member will read what they experience based upon their own experiences, expectations and biases.

Black Ash Basketry and Winter Storytelling

In the 1980's, the Pokagon Potawatomi Black Ash Basket Co-Op organized to maintain, promote and pass on the art of basket making. The Co-Op became a very visible institution of cultural revival and made numerous trips to Chicago to teach basketry and to display and sell their wares. Well-publicized visits to the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian and the Chicago Botanic Gardens reflected their efforts to promote their art and identity in Chicago.³⁴⁴

The Pokagon Potawatomi have participated in other public events in Chicago in recent years. On January 26, 2001, elders from the community together with other members, tribal council representatives and the general public joined in the sixth annual celebration of "Winter: A Time of Telling" held at the Newberry Library.³⁴⁵ Founded by the American Indian Economic Development Association (AIEDA) of Chicago in 1995 it is sponsored by the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies. According to the Newberry Library website,

Since 1995, *Winter: A Time of Telling*, Chicago's only annual public program of its kind, has brought members of Chicago's diverse American Indian community to the Newberry Library to celebrate and share their living cultures. Oral tradition is an integral aspect of Native cultures. Identity, history, spirituality, and values are passed down through stories. The traditional storytelling season for many American Indians falls

³⁴⁴ Letter from Museum Director Jane Edwards to Basket Coop member Rae Daugherty arranging a basket making demonstration and sale, December 5, 1990; Flyer, "Chicago Botanic Garden's Basketry Symposium," September 9-13, 1985, (Michael Williams papers). Jason Wesaw, also a Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member, exhibited at the Mitchell Museum in 2005, and his pottery is for sale in the Museum's gift shop. Mitchell Museum of the American Indian archives.

³⁴⁵ Peyer, 148. As the Dean of the Chicago campus of Native American Education Service College (NAES) at the time and a tribal member, I had the opportunity to participate in the event.

between the first and last frosts when animals featured in their stories are hibernating.³⁴⁶

Bern Peyer notes that during the event that year, Simon Pokagon was honored for his contributions in literature and conservation of oral traditions.³⁴⁷ Baskets from the Co-Op were also sold at the event, according to Peyer.³⁴⁸ This connection between stories and material culture is reminiscent of Pokagon's *Queen of the Woods*, a semi-autobiography that closes with pictures of black ash baskets and other art of the Pokagon Potawatomi.

The Politics of the Battle of Fort Dearborn Park

In 2007, the Prairie District Neighborhood Association (PDNA) sought to create a green space from a gravel and weed covered parcel of land owned by the city. The PDNA initiated an effort to commemorate "The Fort Dearborn Massacre" by naming the small park located near the site of the original attack in 1812 after Black Partridge, and reinstallation of the statute of Black Partridge. The Prairie Avenue neighborhood was undergoing substantial gentrification at the time, and expensive townhomes and high-rise condominiums were replacing underused and empty businesses and residences. However, reinstallation of the statue of Black Partridge met with staunch resistance from the Chicago American Indian Center, according to a 2007 article in *The Chicago Reader*.³⁴⁹

...the greatest potential problem is public reaction, especially from the Native American community, which may object to the depiction of the Indians as aggressors... The day after he took the Black Partridge name to the Park Board, (Mark) Kieras (a member of the local neighborhood association) placed a call to Joseph Podlasek, director of Chicago's American Indian Center. "Hopefully they'll be interested in having it too," Kieras says. "We feel if we get their support, it'll be a slam dunk." That doesn't seem likely. After getting a look at a photo of the statue this week, Podlasek said the name for the park might be OK (though he'd have to see

³⁴⁶ <http://www.newberry.org/programs/WinterTimeofTelling.html> (accessed November 21, 2010).

³⁴⁷ Peyer, 148.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Isaacs, *Chicago Reader*.

the research to be sure), but they'd need a different piece of art. "This is clearly the image that our elders had removed from the Chicago Historical Society many years ago," he said. "We will not support this coming out of storage. Ever."

In addition to whether the statute should be reinstated, was the issue of what to name the park? The Chicago American Indian community and others voiced objections to naming the park after the so-called Fort Dearborn "Massacre." In 1943, an Illinois historian had advocated for renaming the conflict as a battle rather than a massacre.

H. A. Musham, Chicago naval architect, chairman of the Fort Dearborn Memorial commission and for many years a student of Chicago and Illinois' history, recently declared in an article in the Journal of the Illinois Historical society that the Fort Dearborn action should be called the Battle of Chicago and not the Fort Dearborn massacre or Chicago massacre. 'It was not a massacre for it was not an indiscriminate killing.' Musham said. 'Those who perished were killed in the fighting or soon afterward in accordance with Indian customs, or died because of the privations of their captivity. It was, in fact, a minor engagement, a physical struggle between two opposing forces, American and Indian. While it did take place at Chicago, it did not occur at Fort Dearborn. It is therefore correct to call it the battle of Chicago.'³⁵⁰

The alderman's office, the PDNA, the Chicago American Indian Center, and others ultimately came to a consensus, naming the park "Battle of Fort Dearborn Park" and forgoing the installation of the Black Partridge Statue.³⁵¹ On August 15, 2009, the park was dedicated with participation from members of the Neighborhood association and other residents of Chicago, members of the American Indian Center, representatives of the local Illinois National Guard, and members of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.³⁵²

According to press reports,

³⁵⁰ "No 'Massacre' Fort Dearborn Historian Says," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 6, 1943, 24.

³⁵¹ As a Potawatomi tribal member living in Chicago, the American Indian Center consulted me concerning my opinions on both issues.

³⁵² Robert Loerzel, "Returning to Battle of Ft. Dearborn in the Name of a Park," July 31, 2009 broadcast, WBEZ91.5, <http://www.wbez.org/episode-segments/returning-battle-ft-dearborn-name-park> (accessed November 12, 2010). See also the Wikipedia entry "Battle of Fort Dearborn," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Dearborn (accessed November 12, 2010).

During the dedication, (Pokagon) Potawatomi elder Roger Williams blessed the site. To commemorate its history, an Illinois National Guard honor guard presented the colors, and ritual performers offered traditional Native American singing, drumming, and dancing...

Second Ward Alderman Robert Fioretti noted the dedication day focused on unity and healing, and Williams said the City's invitation to the Potawatomi to join the dedication "completed the circle" linking the past and the present... During the planning process, participants decided against naming the site after Potawatomi chief Black Partridge, who warned the soldiers and pioneers about the planned attack. The American Indian Center supported naming the park after Black Partridge but opposed the statue, as did Fioretti. The statue "doesn't symbolize how people can come together," he said, noting it "portrays Native Americans in the wrong light."³⁵³

Lively debate about the name of the park, and whether the event was a massacre or a battle, appeared in the local online newspaper, *The Chicago Examiner*³⁵⁴ in *Chicago Magazine*,³⁵⁵ local public radio station WBEZ,³⁵⁶ and the *Chicago Tribune*.³⁵⁷ Explaining the objection to naming the park after Black Partridge, James Grossman, Vice President for Research and Education at the Newberry Library, Senior Research Associate in the Department of History at the University of Chicago and co-editor of "The Encyclopedia of Chicago," said, "From their (Native) perspective, Black Partridge was a traitor."³⁵⁸ At the dedication of the park, Russell Lewis, Executive Vice President and chief historian of

³⁵³ Miriam Y. Cintrón, "One final battle resolved at Fort Dearborn Park," *Gazette*, September 4, 2009, <http://www.gazettechicago.com/index/2009/09/one-final-battle-resolved-at-fort-dearborn-park/> (accessed November 12, 2010).

³⁵⁴ <http://examiner.com/historic-places-in-chicago/fort-dearborn-chicago-history-pt-2-the-murders-at-the-lee-farm-a-portent-to-the-massacre> (accessed November 12, 2010).

³⁵⁵ Geoffrey Johnson, "The True Story of the Deadly Encounter at Fort Dearborn," *Chicago Magazine*, December, 2009, <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/December-2009/The-True-Story-of-the-Deadly-Encounter-at-Fort-Dearborn/> (accessed November 12, 2010).

³⁵⁶ Loerzel, "Returning to Battle of Ft. Dearborn in the Name of a Park."

³⁵⁷ Ron Grossman, "Site of Chicago's Ft. Dearborn Massacre to be called 'Battle of Ft. Dearborn Park' Chicago Park District braved skirmishes of its own over the name," *Chicago Tribune*, August 14, 2009, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2009-08-14/news/0908130999_1_chicagoans-battle-dearborn-group/2 (accessed November 11, 2010).

³⁵⁸ "Chicago Park where Ft. Dearborn Massacre occurred to be renamed 'Battle of Ft. Dearborn Park,'" NEWSFORNATIVES.COM, <http://newsfor natives.com/blog/2009/08/15/chicago-park-where-ft-dearborn-massacre-occurred-to-be-renamed-battle-of-ft-dearborn-park/> (accessed January 20, 2011).

the Chicago History Museum, pointed out that Simon Pokagon had criticized the battle being called a massacre, “When whites are killed, it is a massacre; when Indians are killed, it is a fight.”³⁵⁹



Fig 4.5: Dedication of The Battle of Fort Dearborn Park³⁶⁰

While some bemoaned the failure to reinstall the statute, more comments focused on the naming issue. However, the new name has stuck. Arguably, the new name recognizes that lives were lost on both sides and better reflects the complex nature of the overall war, with Americans Indians and early settlers battling over restraining or advancing westward expansion, respectively. The battle over “The Battle of Fort Dearborn Park” represented a milestone for Indians in Chicago. Not only were members of the Pokagon Potawatomi and the American Indian Center invited to participate in a memorial, they were included in the planning and allowed a significant voice in how their history was represented.

The Bricolage at the Foster Avenue Underpass of Lakeshore Drive

The presence of the Pokagon Potawatomi continues in Chicago, as reflected in a recent public art installation in the Edgewater/Uptown neighborhoods of the city. In

³⁵⁹ Miriam Y. Cintrón, “One final battle resolved at Fort Dearborn Park.”

³⁶⁰ Photograph of the dedication of The Battle of Fort Dearborn Park. Roger Williams is to the left. Still photograph taken from a video of the ceremonies, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20xInqU8Lqg> (accessed on November 21, 2010).

2009, 48th ward Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith proposed using \$107,770 of discretionary infrastructure funds to create a 3400 square foot mural on Foster Avenue under the Lakeshore Drive underpass “to honor Chicago’s Native American heritage.”³⁶¹ Inspired by a trip to Alaska and the Native art there, the city council member coordinated the creation of a bricolage detailing Chicago’s native past and present.³⁶² The bricolage is a multi-medium mosaic, composed of materials that include ceramic tiles and plaster, that has both original art and historical and contemporary images painted and printed onto the tiles.

The project was the result of a collaboration between alderwoman Mary Ann Smith, her office and staff, an organization called the Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG), the Chicago American Indian Center, the Trickster Gallery in Schaumburg, Illinois, the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian in Evanston, Illinois, American Indian scholars, members of the Chicago Indian arts community, youth volunteers from Alternatives, Inc (a youth and family agency), and the After School Matters program of Chicago.³⁶³ The bricolage, titled “Indian Land Dancing” after a poem by Ojibwe Artist E. Donald Two-Rivers, is located ten minutes from the American Indian Center and the Uptown neighborhood, which was the area that Indians coming to Chicago after World War II primarily located. The power of such public art is noted by Mary Ann Jacobs, an instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. “Art in public space has been

³⁶¹ Lauren Weinberg, “Lake Shore Thrives,” *Time Out Chicago*, July 23-29, 2009, 42.

³⁶² Clare Lane, “Vast Mural to depict city’s Indian roots,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 5, 2009, Section 4, 2.

³⁶³ Chiraq Patel, “Native Americans celebrated at Foster underpass mural,” *Uptown Exchange*, November 2009, 10. As Executive Director of the Mitchell Museum in 2009, I was consulted on certain design aspects.

enabling in a community...the work becomes embraced and that grows richer over time...it grounds people within their own consciousness of place.”³⁶⁴

Amidst the symbolic images -- which include a rising sun of welcome, a hand covering a giant turtle, a thunderbird, cattails along the Lake Michigan shoreline, an eagle soaring and a circle of life -- are also images of Mohawk ironworkers, family photographs, a lithograph reproduction of Black Hawk, a new painting of world renowned ballerina Maria Tallchief, and images of other notable Indians residents of Chicago. The tiles are interspersed with pieces of mirror that allow the viewers to see themselves within the mural. Included in the montage, which embraces both sides of Foster Avenue, are the visages of Leopold and Simon Pokagon, as well as a quote from the latter Pokagon’s “The Red Man’s Greeting” and a listing of the land cessions treaties involving Chicago in which the Potawatomi participated.³⁶⁵ Additional images of the Potawatomi include a reproduction of a montage of Potawatomi chiefs painted by George Winter in the first half of the 19th century and a map of the “Trail of Death,” the route taken by Potawatomi of Indiana and Illinois when forcibly removed to the west in 1838 by the federal government. One section of the wall includes a rendering of a tipi and books, painted by Chicago artist Robert Wapahi (Dakota) to “symbolize local tribe’s transition from oral to written storytelling.”³⁶⁶ (See Fig. 4.6) Whether intentional or not, Wahaphi’s image evokes the contributions of Simon Pokagon.

³⁶⁴ Lane, 2.

³⁶⁵ Weinberg, 42, Patel, 10, Lane, 2.

³⁶⁶ Weinberg, 42.



Fig. 4.6: The Mural on Foster Avenue (detail)³⁶⁷

Indian Land Dancing was dedicated on August 22, 2009, with the attendance of Mayor Richard M. Daley, the alderwoman, many of the projects participants, and the general public. After the ceremony, the Chicago Indian community held a pow wow to honor the bricolage and the effort and collaboration that made it possible.³⁶⁸ The bricolage is a public and proud demonstration that the Chicago Indian community, and the City of Chicago, recognize the continued vitality of the Native community and its connections to the City's first urban Indians, the Pokagon Potawatomi.

Conclusion

Monuments and memorials to the Potawatomi abound in the greater Chicago area. They attempt to maintain the memory of the first peoples of Chicago in the collective memory of the residents of Chicago today. Most recently, there has been a turn to collaborating with tribal members in those events and that has resulted in a different

³⁶⁷ Photograph by the author.

³⁶⁸ Patel, 10.

representation of the peoples intended to be honored and memorialized. The non-Native newcomers created their architectural renderings to commemorate the peoples they had supplanted, in their view. Native peoples have spoken back, including Simon Pokagon and other Pokagon tribal members, by rendering their own memorials, whether in literature, performance, or structure. Today, a resident or visitor to Chicago has the opportunity to read these memorials like chapters in a book – each chapter reflecting the course of Indian experience in Chicago and the evolution of Native/non-Native relations in the City. In the next chapter, I will explore the efforts of the Pokagon Potawatomi to recover a piece of Chicago when they sued for possession of the city's lakefront in 1914.

Chapter 5

Claims Making to the Chicago Lakefront

Yankee and voyageur, the Irish and the Dutch, Indian traders and Indian agents, halfbreed and quarter-breed and no breed at all, in the final counting they were all of a single breed. They all had hustler's blood. And kept the old Sauganash hustler's uproar... They hustled the land, they hustled the Indian, hustled by night and they hustled by day. They hustled guns and furs and peltries, grog and the blood-red whiskey-dye; they hustled with dice or a deck or derringer. . . . And decided the Indians were wasting every good hustler's time. Slept till noon and scolded the Indians for being lazy. Paid the Pottawattomies off in cash in the cool of the Indian evening: and had the cash back to the dime by the break of the Indian dawn. They'd do anything under the sun except work for a living, and we remember them reverently, with Balaban and Katz, under such subtitles as 'Founding Fathers,' 'Dauntless Pioneers' or 'Far-Visioned Conquerors.

–Nelson Algren³⁶⁹

Introduction

Nelson Algren may have captured the spirit of the 1830's, an era when the majority of Potawatomi Indians were forced into signing the last of the land cession treaties for Chicago, and were then marched west beyond the Mississippi River. But the Pokagon Potawatomi were unwilling to concede to the "hustle." At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, utilizing a system of justice created by non-Natives and deploying legal strategies based upon making land claims grounded in treaty rights; the Pokagon Potawatomi fought for possession of ancestral lands along the Chicago lakefront. They sought to not only maintain a presence in Chicago; they also sought to retain a part of Chicago itself for themselves. Although the claim ultimately failed, it

³⁶⁹ Nelson Algren, *Chicago, City on the Make* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 11-12.

represents the importance of Chicago to the Pokagon Potawatomi community and their willingness to risk public ridicule or worse in order to advance their desire to remain a significant stakeholder in the city of Chicago.

I should explain that there were several reasons for my interest in the Potawatomi lakefront claim, which may also reveal some biases on my part. First, as noted previously, I am a tribal member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi; the case involves the history and leadership of the Indian community to which I belong. Secondly, I am a lawyer and I have worked in the past as a tribal attorney; I have a substantial interest in matters involving sovereignty and treaties. Lastly, I find the lakefront land claim compelling because of its nexus, for me, of the oral traditions of my tribe, the legal traditions in which I was schooled, and the academic traditions that I have been immersed in while pursuing my Ph.D..

I grew up in southwest Michigan, where the Pokagon Band is still located, my grandmother, Goldie White, was full-blooded Potawatomi, my uncle was the first Pokagon Band tribal member to serve as a tribal attorney (I was the second). I grew up hearing stories from my elders that included an account of how “we”, the Potawatomi, had been cheated out of the Chicago lakefront. The narrative was one of a great injustice that had been done to the Tribe; and that our tribal leaders had taken our claim “all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.” The story concluded with how justice had been denied us; that wrongly and unfairly, others were on our lakefront land in Chicago. The story always ended with speculation about how life would be for us... “if only.” These stories were a part of the oral tradition of my family and our Tribe. My legal education taught me that lawsuits could be complicated things, difficult for lay people to understand or

decipher. Losing cases might be winners and vice versa. Yet, frivolous cases did not often make it to the Supreme Court only to reside in the collective memories of a people for decades. Nonetheless, the matter slipped into my subconscious, pushed into the back of my mind by the many concerns and demands of life that took precedence.

In 1998, I decided to head to Minneapolis to get a second B.A. in American Indian studies from the University of Minnesota and then went on to the University of Chicago to pursue an M.A. in the Social Sciences. While I was at Chicago, and upon the advice of my mentor, Professor Raymond Fogelson, I began to read more carefully what ethnohistorian James Clifton had written about the Pokagon claim to the Chicago lakefront. Frankly, Clifton's conclusions did not convince me. I considered his assertion that the claim was faulty because "the lands involved did not exist during the treaty era at all." Interestingly, this argument had little bearing on the outcome of the case itself, which hinged, for the courts, on the nature of the Potawatomi possession, or ownership, of the Chicago lands. Here, in ethical terms at the very least, the Potawatomi claim merits serious consideration. After all, the New York Oneida had been successful in their land claim in the *County of Oneida v. Oneida Indian Nation*, (470 U.S. 226 (1985)). Water rights of a tribe to Pyramid Lake had been protected in *Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Indians v. Morton*, 354 F. Supp. 252 (1972). In that same year, the Passamaquoddy successfully sued the Federal government to force it to sue the State of Maine, for the recovery of tribal lands that were improperly taken in 1794. *Joint Tribal Council of Passamaquoddy Tribe v. Morton*, 528 F.2d 370 (1975). In a long line of treaty rights cases beginning in the 1970's, the Ojibwe had successfully secured their usufructory rights to hunt, fish, and gather and those tribal leaders were rightfully acknowledged for

their vision.³⁷⁰ To understand the claim to the shoreline of Chicago, I also needed to learn more about the city.

A Brief Excursion Into Chicago

Early the red men gave a name to the river,
The place of the skunk
The river of the wild onion smell
Shee-caw-go³⁷¹

- Carl Sandburg

Chicago, situated at the mouth of the Chicago River on the shores of Lake Michigan, is the third largest city in the United States with a population within the city limits of almost three million people as of the 2010 US Census.³⁷² From its beginnings, it was a city of ambitions and aspirations.³⁷³ Located in what is now the State of Illinois, it

³⁷⁰ In the Great Lakes region, beginning in the 1970's, protests and lawsuits became the battleground for defending the treaty rights. In 1974 – Judge Boldt issued an opinion in *US v. Washington*, 384 F. Supp. 312 (1974) that upheld the rights of the tribes in the Northwest to fish off reservation and manage fisheries was upheld. The opinion also gave Plaintiff tribes an equal share in the harvest of fish in their traditional fishing areas on ceded land. Those rights had been guaranteed in a treaty in the previous century. On March 8, 1974, Fred and Mike Tribble of the LCO Band of Ojibwe in Wisconsin were arrested by the Wisconsin DNR for possession of a spear and for the taking of off reservation, inland water fish. Six years later, In 1980, Judge Fox rendered his decision in *US v. Michigan*, 623 F.2d 448 (1980). The Fox Decision upheld the rights of Michigan Ojibwe tribes to fish in ceded areas of the Great Lakes, within the boundaries of the state, based upon an 1836 treaty reserving that right. That ruling was followed in 1983 with the decision by Judge Voigt. In that case, *Lac Courte Oreilles vs. Wisconsin*, 700 F.2d. 341 (1983), Judge Voigt affirmed that hunting, fishing and gathering rights were reserved by the Ojibwe in treaties of 1837, 1842, and 1854. The case involved the Tribble brothers and represented a vindication some nine years after their initial arrest. The final case affirming the rights of Indian peoples in the Great Lakes to the usufructory rights guaranteed in treaties with the U.S. came in 1999. In *Mille Lacs vs. Minnesota*, 526 U.S. 172 (1999), a counterpart to the Voight decision in Wisconsin and the Fox decision in Michigan, the US Supreme Court ruled that the 1837 treaty ceding most of northern Minnesota, reserving the right of the Ojibwe to hunt, fish and gather on ceded territory, was still valid.

³⁷¹ Carl Sandberg, *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2003), originally published in 1911).

³⁷² United States Census Bureau data online. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> (accessed June 5, 2010).

³⁷³ From early on in its history, Chicago was self-consciously impressed with its own importance in the world. The city would have the opportunity to showcase itself for the world beginning in 1893 with the Columbian Exposition. See for instance the civic *boosterism* evident in a typical tourist guide, J.F. Martin, *Martin's World's Fair Album-Atlas and Family Souvenir* (Chicago: C. Ropp & Sons, 1892), 1. The introduction reads, "Chicago of 1892 is the attraction of the world. Going back a few brief years, we find a small village, forming the nucleus from which has grown, like magic, a mighty city ... on October 8th, 1871, the world was electrified by the news that the rapidly growing City of Chicago was laid in ashes ... the last Chapter is entitled "Chicago of To-day," and gives in a brief description of all the points of interest

serves as an economic center of the Midwest and the surrounding population exceeds nine million. The name Chicago comes from *Eschiigwa or Chicagou*, which in the language of the Potawatomi Indians refers to the place of 'wild onions' or "skunk."³⁷⁴ The area was likely so named because of the smell of marshland onions, leeks, or garlic that used to cover it.³⁷⁵

Historically an area of intertribal traverse and commerce, by the late 18th century the Chicago region was primarily Potawatomi territory. In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville, between the United States and the Indians of the southern Great Lakes region, provided for a six square mile area at the mouth of the Chicago River for erection of an American fort. In 1803, Fort Dearborn was built.³⁷⁶ Jean Baptiste du Sable, a Haitian man of African descent, is acknowledged as the first non-Native resident and a founder of contemporary Chicago.³⁷⁷ Du Sable married Kittahawaa, a Potawatomi Indian woman from a prominent family, and established a fur trading business in 1779. By 1833, the city was incorporated, and from the beginning, its location near the southern edge of Lake Michigan made it a transportation hub and population magnet. Early American settlers

in this great city – an Exposition in itself - “and just the information desired by visitors and strangers in Chicago.”

³⁷⁴ James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

³⁷⁵ Jay Miller, “Land and Lifeway in the Chicago Area: Chicago and the Illinois-Miami,” in *Indians of the Chicago Area*, ed. Terry Straus (Chicago: NAES College Press, 1989); Milo M. Quaife, *Checagou, From Indian Wigwam to Modern City, 1673-1835* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 17-20; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis, Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), 23; Virgil J. Vogel, “Indian Place Names in Illinois,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 55, no. 2 (Summer, 1962): 157-189; Edward Callary, *Place Names of Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 68-69. According to Callary there are at least thirteen explanations for the origins and meaning of “Chicago.” See also Milo M. Quaife, “Garlic River Beginnings,” in *Lake Michigan* (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company Co., 1944), Chapter 6; John F. Swenson, “Chicagoua/Chicago: The Origin, Meaning, and Etymology of a Place Name,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 84.4 (Winter 1991): 235-248.

³⁷⁶ A.T. Andreas, *History of Chicago From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Chicago: unknown, 1884).

³⁷⁷ Quaife, *Checagou, 1673-1835*, 38. See also the story of du Sable courtesy of the Chicago Public Library, <http://www.chipublic.org/004chicago/timeline/dusable.html> (accessed April 17, 2010).

included its first mayor, William Ogden, and one of its most prominent early entrepreneurs, John Kinzie. According to historian Colin G. Calloway, the canal constructed in 1848 connecting the Chicago and Illinois Rivers, made travel possible from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean via the Mississippi and St. Lawrence Rivers, and made Chicago “the fulcrum of the major east-west and north-south transportation axes serving the interior of the continent.”³⁷⁸ This continued with railroads, and Chicago became the center of nationwide distributors and retailers including Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck & Company.³⁷⁹

Lake Michigan was not only a source of food and route of travel but also a primary source of fresh water for city residents. As the population grew, the lake water near the city became polluted from the waste being dumped into the Chicago River. The City solved that problem by engineering the reversal of the flow of the river in 1871.³⁸⁰ Human manipulation of the geography was by then nothing new to Chicago; it had become a hallmark of the urban landscape of Chicago. Speaking of Chicago and other large cities of the American West, Historian William Cronon notes,

The land might have been taken from Indians, its profits might sometimes have been expropriated by absentee landlords, its small farmers might on occasion have suffocated beneath a burden of accumulating debt, but much of what made the land valuable in the first place had little to do with the exploitation of people. The exploitation of nature came first.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count, The Native American West Before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 218. Milo M. Quaife noted “The prosperity of Chicago and her possibilities of future growth have alike been conditioned, at every period of her existence as a city, by the character and extent of her highway systems. These have been of threefold character, comprising waterways, country thoroughfares, and railroads.” Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago’s Highways Old and New* (Chicago: D.F. Keller and Company, 1923), 14.

³⁷⁹ Edwin O. Gale, *Chicago and Vicinity* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1902); Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago, 1673 – 1848* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1937).

³⁸⁰ James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). See also Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969).

³⁸¹ Cronon, 150.

Chicago was rich in resources and opportunity ripe for the picking, and economic development was the unofficial motto of the citizenry. By 1871, when much of the city burned in the Great Chicago Fire, the city had grown to a population of over 300,000. After the fire, the rebuilding of the city gave it the atmosphere of a boomtown.



Fig. 5.1: Advertisement for a Diorama Drama of the Great Fire of Chicago ³⁸²

Because of its location in the center of the nation’s heartland, yet with the ability to engage in international shipping, Chicago sustained substantial economic growth throughout the first half of the twentieth century.³⁸³ Ships and railroads crowded its lakefront while commerce and the business of doing business occupied the energies of its inhabitants, rich and poor.³⁸⁴ Chicago was the location of the Pullman Railcar Factory

³⁸² Contemporary lithograph reflecting the continued fascination of residents in the catastrophe they had overcome. From the collection of the author.

³⁸³ “... Chicago would be a metropolis—not the central city of the continent as the boosters had hoped but the gateway city to the Great West, with a vast reach and dominance that flowed from its control over that region’s trade with the rest of the world.” Cronon, 92

³⁸⁴ Typical of the civic pride of the time is the declaration, “He who would study America must come to Chicago, where beats the heart of this great, nervous, fast growing and ambitious nation. From out this whirlpool of business, old Father Time emerges, battle-scarred and bruised, for here his passage is jealously contended and every step vigorously opposed. No mere idler can be happy in Chicago; here is the spirit of **work**, and every man, woman and child feels it.” (emphasis original). *Chicago, Souvenir of Chicago In Colors* (Chicago?: Unknown, 1892), 1.

and the site of the social experiment of the company town named Pullman. The city exhibited considerable civic pride and investment, including an elaborate city parks system as well as hosting two worlds' fairs within forty years.



Fig. 5.2: 1893 lithograph depicting attractions at the World's Columbian Exposition ³⁸⁵

However, it was also a place of substantial labor unrest, including the 1886 strike by the Knights of Labor, one of the first national unions, the infamous Haymarket Riot on May 4th of the same year, and the Pullman Railcar Strike of 1894, led by labor activist, and later International Workers of the World (IWW) leader and Socialist Party presidential candidate Eugene Debs.³⁸⁶ The city wrestled with the misuse of both its resources and its residents during this period. For the new residents of Chicago this was a “new world” and the opportunity to “get it right.” As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan points out,

What they [the early immigrants to the United States] really wanted they could have, namely, a participatory form of governing – the right to shape their own destiny. The meaning of landscape (that is, land shape) had subtly shifted; the emphasis was on the shaping of a place into something far better than the one they had left. . . . Ironically, this desire to create a

³⁸⁵ From the collection of the author.

³⁸⁶ Grossman, Keating, and Reiff, 61.

new, utopian community, [included] cutting down not only trees but Indians in the process . . . ³⁸⁷

The exploitation of nature *and people* is an undercurrent throughout the narrative of the Pokagon Potawatomi land claims. Landscapes, like books with layers of pages, are written and rewritten. When read, landscapes have a multiplicity of meanings. As Donald Mitchell, an early writer in critical geography noted,

The degree to which landscapes are made (by hands and minds) and represented (by particular people and classes, and through the accretion of history and myth) indicates that landscapes are in some very important senses “authored” . . . The text metaphor is important, therefore, because it suggests that hegemonic productions – including landscapes – are always undermined by alternative individual and collective readings. In fact, it is the very act of reading that authors. ³⁸⁸

Mapping the Potawatomi Land Claim

Maps have peculiar political and social powers. For Europeans coming to North America, mapping became a way of claims making. Land tenure had been in a state of transition in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was during this period, in England, that the open fields and commons of the country were enclosed and passed into private ownership. ³⁸⁹ The move towards the privatization of land ownership in Europe was profound.

. . . private landholding added to the European penchant for scientific measurement of land and led to subtle changes in conceptualizing national territory. To cross the Atlantic, Europeans had developed precise systems for navigating distances, but the divvying up land for individual ownership made geometric knowledge even more of a necessity and gave rise to scientific land surveying as a profession . . . By 1688, surveying had become so commonplace that John Love justified publishing yet another manual

³⁸⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, “Foreword,” in *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic, From Britain’s Renaissance to America’s New World* by Kenneth Robert Olwig (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), xvii-xviii.

³⁸⁸ Donald Mitchell, *Cultural Geography, A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 121, 123.

³⁸⁹ Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness, Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20.

by promising to describe surveying in America as well as in England. By the start of the eighteenth century, surveying land for individual ownership had become respectable and widespread.³⁹⁰

Maps were routinely drawn by cartographers who had never set foot in North America, yet their renditions of the continent, whether accurate or not, represented an effort at legitimization of colonial claims to the region.³⁹¹ Native people had maps too, although their maps were usually based upon firsthand knowledge of the land, and were intended not only to establish territory, but also to pass on knowledge and record events. European maps are regarded as “non-indexical” in that they are standardized representations intended to be independent of the context in which they are created.³⁹² Indigenous maps, on the other hand, are considered “indexical” in that they are created for a particular function or reflect a certain context. Non-indexical maps are meant to be comprehensible without reference to any particular knowledge other than general cartographic conventions, although this is an ideal rather than a reality with regard to “Western” maps. In fact, the premise of standardization is the basis for an ideology of maps as “scientific” rather than “political” documents.³⁹³ In reality, all maps are created for a purpose and all require interpretation. As David Turnbull states, “Maps can have a variety of functions: they can make political jokes...they can educate and entertain...and they can tell lies. All maps also have a latent symbolic function, for example, legitimating and disseminating the state’s view of reality.”³⁹⁴ Turnbull concludes,

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 21.

³⁹¹ For a review of the three hundred year process by which Europeans came to understand the Western Hemisphere as a *place*, see Eviatar Zerubavel, *Terra Cognita, The Mental Discovery of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

³⁹² David Turnbull, *Maps Are Territories, Science Is An Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 19.

³⁹³ Ibid, 20.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 44.

European maps are not autonomous. They can only be read through the myths that Europeans tell about their relationship to the land...Maps, like theories, have power in virtue of introducing modes of manipulation and control that are not possible without them. They become evidence of reality in themselves and can only be challenged through the production of other maps or theories.³⁹⁵

Early maps of the thirteen colonies show the Chicago area as being within the charter of the colony of Virginia. In 1787, Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance, which divided the Great Lakes region into six potential states in anticipation of their eventual settlement and admission into the Union. The first maps of the continent were often inaccurate, but it was the setting down of the topography to paper that gave the map its power, not whether it was accurate.³⁹⁶ The drawing of the map itself had a performative function, one of making claim to land. When the region that became Illinois was ceded by the Indians in the Treaty of St. Louis (1816),³⁹⁷ the United States government commenced to survey the territory. Platting a region on a map, demarcating its boundary, and publishing the results became part of the ritual of territory taking in North America. After treaties with the native inhabitants of Chicago had secured most of northeastern Illinois, the federal government sent surveyors to map out its new territory. According to J.B. Harley, “maps help invent space, and in fact, were an undergirding medium of state power.”³⁹⁸ Using the surveyors’ language of metes and bounds, land

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ “The Portuguese cartographer Diego Ribero’s map of the world (1529) (depicting) Pope Alexander VI’s ‘line of demarcation’, dividing the undiscovered world between Spain and Portugal following the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. Despite the fact that no one had either the instruments or the techniques to locate or define the line with any accuracy, the mere fact of having a map enabled a division of the world with immense political ramifications.” Ibid, 58.

³⁹⁷ In a treaty executed on August 24, 1816, in St. Louis, the Potawatomi Indians ceded a strip of land twenty miles wide, that reached from Lake Michigan south to the Illinois River: the northern boundary is located ten miles north of the Chicago River. The land ceded by the treaty would become a large part of the City of Chicago.

³⁹⁸ J.B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and Power,” in ed. D. Cosgrove, S. Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscapes: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments* (New York: Cambridge, 1989), 277-312.

cessions were dutifully recorded in both written and map form. Doing so was easy when geography did not interfere, however, it could be problematic in places where the landscape was not conducive to neat division by straight lines. Such was the case with Chicago. Because of the meandering border of Lake Michigan, the land cession treaties with the Indians resorted to using the shoreline as the reference point for boundary. Similarly, the surveyor, John Wall, who completed a survey of northeast Illinois in anticipation of Illinois' admittance into statehood, could only draw an arbitrary line that ran close to the shoreline of 1821. The manipulation of maps coincided with the exploitation of the environment in the colonial project of the United States. The genius of the Pokagon Potawatomi is that they responded by using the very tools that had been used to deprive them of their lands in their effort to regain some of their territory.

Making a Claim on the Turtles Back

In 1914, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians sued the City of Chicago and other landowners for possession of the Chicago lakefront. The lawsuit arose out of a controversy over ownership of the shorefront that had been "reclaimed" by dumping fill along the lakefront and extended the City east into the lake, a process commencing after the Chicago Fire of 1871 and the need to rid the city of enormous amounts of burnt rubble. Before "The Fire," the shoreline of the city of Chicago ran roughly along what is now Michigan Avenue. Streeterville, the Gold Coast, Lincoln, Grant and Jackson Parks, the Museum Campus, Soldier Field, the Illinois Central and the Metra lines, and Lakeshore Drive are all on landfill. The filling in and extending of the shore continues to this day.

James Clifton was the first, it appears, to have called the Potawatomi claim to the lakebed and reclaimed Chicago lakefront “The Sandbar Case.”³⁹⁹ Clifton further elaborated on the claim in his book, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*. According to Clifton,

The origins of the Sand Bar Case (or Claim) are somewhat obscure, being neither well documented nor clearly remembered by living Pokagons. But it is plain that this audacious legal action was in large part simply another aspect of the heritage left behind by him by the inimitable Simon Pokagon [son of Leopold Pokagon, the Band’s negotiator and leader at the Treaty of Chicago in 1833]. Apparently, [the lawsuit] grew out of the relationship between ‘Chief Simon’ and some lesser members of Chicago’s elite, who often favored him with their hospitality.⁴⁰⁰

When not writing, Simon Pokagon had spent much of his time involved in tribal politics. As noted in Chapter 3, though no longer a leader of the Pokagon Potawatomi by the end of the 1890s, he continued to represent himself as “Chief” of the Band. In 1896, the United States Court of Claims awarded tribal members some recompense for the failure of the American governments to pay monies promised in treaties in the first half of the 19th century with the Potawatomi.⁴⁰¹ On the heels of that success, Simon Pokagon was an early supporter of the land claim and commenced selling “interests” in the Chicago lakefront to non-Native real estate speculators.⁴⁰² Although he had no authority

³⁹⁹ James A. Clifton, “Simon Pokagon's Sandbar: Potawatomi Claims to Chicago's Lakefront.” *Michigan Historical Review* vol. 71, no. 5 (1987): 12-17.

⁴⁰⁰ James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983-Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America and Potawatomi Indian Nation Inc., 1984), 112.

⁴⁰¹ Clifton wrote that “. . . in January of 1890 . . . the House and Senate approved legislation enabling the Potawatomi of Michigan and Indiana to bring suit against the United States in the Court of Claims. Congress practically dictated most terms of a finding to the Court.” Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 100. The Court of Claims ruled in favor of the claim of the Potawatomi and awarded them \$104,626 for unpaid back treaty annuities plus interest. This payment, however, caused a rift within the tribe concerning payment of the tribal attorneys and exacerbated an already complicated political scene within the community as evidenced by the substantial discord over legal fees. NARA Microfilm Roll 80, Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) Special Files, “Claims of J.B. Shipman and J. Critcher for legal services to the Pokagon Potawatomi,” National Archives and Records Administration, Great Lakes Region, Chicago, IL

⁴⁰² “Own 130 Acres In Chicago. Claim of the Pottawatomie Indians—Agents of the Tribe to See About It” *New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1897, 1. “Benton Harbor, Mich., Sept 21, -- Simon Pokagon, Chief of the Pottawatomie tribe of Indians, and Lawyer Ingalls of Hartford, Mich., were here this morning on their way

to sell such interests in this communal claim, Pokagon drew substantial attention to the cause, while making sure to cover his own day-to-day living expenses.⁴⁰³

After Simon Pokagon's death in 1899, his son Charles attempted to assert his authority to press forward the claim to the Chicago lakefront, issuing press releases and making public announcements. During this time, the Pokagon Potawatomi also unsuccessfully petitioned Congress to recognize their claim to the lakefront.⁴⁰⁴ Charles Pokagon's efforts culminated in 1901, when he attempted to organize an "invasion" of the Chicago lakefront, threatening to carry tribal members and their possessions to Chicago overland by truck or boat.⁴⁰⁵ The "invasion" turned out to be a publicity stunt, though it surely must have bemused many, both Native and non-Native. Although the lakefront invasion never materialized, the Potawatomi continued to lobby for their claim to the Chicago lakefront.⁴⁰⁶

Efforts were initiated to bring a legal action to the Court of Claims and a trip was authorized to Washington D.C. to generate support for the claim, although much of the

to Chicago to see W. H. Cox, a Chicago capitalist, in relation to a claim that the Pottawatomie tribe hold title to 130 acres of land in the heart of Chicago, which land is mostly in the possession of Mr. Cox." In an obituary it was reported "Pokagon made frequent trips to Chicago, hired a special lawyer to look into the matter, but just before his death became convinced there was nothing to it." See also "Death of Simon Pokagon," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 28, 1899, 5. If Pokagon did give up any claim to the lakefront, it may have been because he knew he had attempted to quitclaim any interest of the tribe's to real estate speculators. However, any quitclaim deed signed by Simon Pokagon's could only have served to legally tender his own interests in the realty, since he had no authority to sign such a deed on behalf of the Pokagon people *in toto*.

⁴⁰³ See page 8 in Chapter 3 with accompanying footnote and appendix.

⁴⁰⁴ "End of Po-Ka-Gon Claim, House Committee Decides Against Demand of Indians, All Rights to Lake Michigan and other Illinois Lands Ceded Long Ago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 1, 1900, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ "Indians to Take Lake Front, Pottawatomes Decide to Go to Chicago and Occupy the Disputed Land," *The Washington Post*, Jan 8, 1901; "Pottawatomes to Squat, Redskins Chose Daring Young Leader and Decide to Invade the Lake Front of Chicago," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 9, 1901, 1; "Indians to Seize Lakefront Lands, Pottawatomes to Descend upon the Windy City, Chief Pokagon's Secy Asks for Terms for Transport of Men, Women and Children, Ponies, Cats, Dogs, Pet Deer and 'Tame' Wild Animals," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1901, 3.

⁴⁰⁶ "Indians Claim to Lake Front," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 27, 1900, 9; "To Settle Land Rights of Pottawatomes," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb 13, 1900, 7; "Indians Appeal to President," *The Washington Post*, Feb, 19, 1905, 4; "Indians Claiming Submerged Land, Pokagon Tribe Appeals to Legislature in Fight for Made Ground Near Lake Michigan," *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr 8, 1909, 1.

news reports of the day regarding the claim were unsupportive.⁴⁰⁷ On occasion the press also reported that the Pokagon Potawatomi had sold their claim.⁴⁰⁸ Minutes of the Business Committee of the tribe indicate that they did attempt to sell their claim on at least two occasions.⁴⁰⁹ Correspondence after one of their meetings reflects the concern of Business Committee members that one of their own had engaged in self-dealing regarding the lakefront claim.⁴¹⁰ At other meetings, the Committee expressed “sincere confidence in our Lake Front Claims in the vicinity of Chicago, Illinois,”⁴¹¹ sent an appeal to the U.S. President,⁴¹² decided that any Committee member who became intoxicated while on tribal business would be expelled,⁴¹³ and that Committee members would receive compensation equal to 1% of any monies recovered on behalf of the

⁴⁰⁷ "Indians Have No Title To Sell," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 22, 1902, 1; "State May Seize Lake Front Land, Title to 'Streeterville,' Chicago Beach Hotel, and Shore Club Questioned," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 11, 1909, 1; "Ignores Indians' Claim to Shore" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 27, 1909, 9.

⁴⁰⁸ "Indians Sell Chicago Claims, Robert Bines of This City Buys Supposed Rights of Pottawatomies to Lake Shore Land, Pays \$100 To Each One," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 18, 1902, 1. Minutes of the Business Committee appear to confirm that they entered into a contract with Bines and were paid a lump sum of \$33,900.00 by him. Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, June 22, 1902, Michael Williams papers.

⁴⁰⁹ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, December 27, 1899, August 5, 1901, Williams papers. Other Minutes indicate that several years later the Business Committee was working with W. H. Cox (Cox had obtained a quit-claim deed signed by Simon Pokagon “on behalf of himself and as Chief of the Indian Tribe of Pottawatomies” on April 5, 1897). Apparently, this did not prevent Cox from working with the Business Committee on their claim. Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, March 25, 1909, Williams papers. W.E. Johnson would appear at a later Business Committee meeting to discuss the “fact(sic) and documents of our Chicago Lake front lands” Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, March 25, 1909. Williams Papers. Just prior to filing suit in federal court, the Business Committee continued to work with Cox and Johnson. On June 8, 1912, the Committee reviewed correspondence from Johnson and Cox who were described as “our representatives” in the minutes. Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, June 8, 1912, Williams papers. Cox was present at the Committee meeting of June 17, 1912 to “make a partial report of their progressing to our Chicago Lake front lands,” Minutes, Williams papers. His partner W.E. Johnson also submitted a written letter to the committee with the stirring conclusion, “Therefore, let our single purpose be – regardless of whom it may please or offend among men – to speak the truth in its simplicity and power, not to conceal danger or fill over crimes, or screen the wrong-doer.” Johnson to Chief, Chairman Secretary and Members of the Business Committee, September 28, 1912.

⁴¹⁰ Correspondence from J.H. Cushway to Michael Williams, February 19, 1903, Williams papers.

⁴¹¹ October 21, 1911, Williams Papers.

⁴¹² Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, November 17, 1900, Williams papers.

⁴¹³ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, June 4, 1901, Williams papers.

tribe.⁴¹⁴ They made provisions that monies received would “be paid to the heads of family (with the) exception of Orphans, (who) must have guardians,”⁴¹⁵ that no less “than ¼ blood be allowed into the Pokagon band after November 12, 1901,⁴¹⁶ and that each member of the Band be required to pay \$3.00 to the Committee “for the purpose of maintaining, advancing and protecting the property rights and all done and needed to be done past present and future to that end.”⁴¹⁷

From the minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee that are available, it appears that much time and effort was devoted to retaining legal counsel willing and able to prosecute their suit.⁴¹⁸ Finally, in 1914, the Chicago law firm of Burkhalter and Grossberg filed suit in the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, at the request of the Pokagon Potawatomi Tribe.⁴¹⁹ Plaintiffs to the action were Chief John Williams, his brother and Secretary of the Tribe, Michael Williams, and the Business Committee of the Band. Defendants included the City of Chicago, the Illinois Central Railroad, the South Park Commissioners, the Lincoln Park Commissioners, the Illinois Steel Company, and the Michigan Central Railroad Company, among others.

The Pokagon lawsuit concluded more than a decade of efforts by the tribe to secure compensation for the lakebed, which was now becoming the most valuable part of Chicago. The Federal District Court promptly dismissed the case, and on appeal to the

⁴¹⁴ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, June 4, 1901, Williams papers.

⁴¹⁵ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, undated, Williams papers.

⁴¹⁶ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, November 12, 1901, Williams papers.

⁴¹⁷ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, November 12 and 13, 1901, Williams papers. See also Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983*, 92-107.

⁴¹⁸ Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, August 6, 1900, January 5, 1901, August 15, 1901, April 21, 1901, April 24, 1901, June 4, 1901, June 5, 1901, June 8, 1901, June 15, 1901, November 12, 1901, November 21, 1901, December 20, 1901, January 17, 1902, Williams papers.

⁴¹⁹ “Indians Claim Lake Front, Descendants of Many Tribes Sue Under Old Grant,” *New York Times*, Nov 13, 1913, 1.

U.S. Supreme Court in 1917, the Indians continued to press their claims without success.⁴²⁰

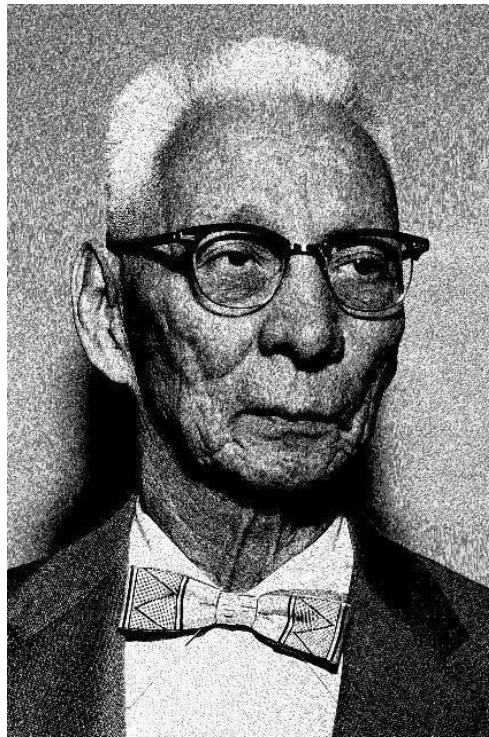


Fig. 5.3: Michael B. Williams⁴²¹

The Court's decision would turn on the nature of the Indians' original ownership interest in the lakefront and whether the Indians had abandoned that space/place.

According to historian Richard White, the difference between space and place is human intervention.⁴²² As Robert Sacks argues,

Place-making is essential to both our transformations and to our ideas and images of what really ought to be. Place has a particular meaning...It does

⁴²⁰ *Williams v. City of Chicago, et. al.*, 242 US 434 (1917).

⁴²¹ (b. Jan. 29, 1881- d. March 11, 1969). Photograph of Williams circa late 1960's from the Michael Williams papers.

⁴²² Richard White, lecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April, 12, 2010. The Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities presents "The Spatial Turn: The Parameters of a Digital History" by Richard White, Stanford University, Margaret Byrne Professor of American History. Put another way, according to Yi-Fu Tuan, "... the meaning of space often merges with that of place. 'Space' is more abstract than 'place.' What begins as undifferentiated space become place as we get to know it better and endow it with value." Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place, The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6. For additional discussions of space and place see David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), Chapter 9, "The Social Construction of Space and Time" and Chapter 11, "From Space to Place and Back Again."

not refer simply to a location in space. Rather, it means an area of space that we bound and to some degree control with rules about what can and cannot take place. Place can be any size, from the small-scale of a room or a sacred grove, to the larger scale of a farm or city, to a vast territorial unit such as a nation-state or empire...⁴²³

Over the last two hundred years, Chicago has witnessed extraordinary intervention from its immigrant residents. Keith Basso authored an important work on the power of place in *Wisdom Sits in Places, Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. In it, Basso writes,

...anthropologists have paid scant attention to one of the most basic dimensions of human experience – the close companion of heart, mind, often subdued yet potentially overwhelming, that is known as *sense of place*. Missing from the discipline is a thematized concern with the ways in which citizens of the earth constitute their landscapes and take themselves to be connected to them...Place-based thoughts about the self lead commonly to thoughts about other things – other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associations that ramify unaccountably with into expanding spheres of awareness that they themselves engender...(p)laces also provide points from which to look out on life, to grasp one's position in the order of things, to contemplate events from somewhere in particular...places consist in what gets made of them...⁴²⁴

A standard recitation of the creation story of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi is

After the Great Flood, Waynaboojo (a spirit being, cultural hero and trickster figure) found himself resting on a log with the other animals. There was no land to be found. Waynaboojo asked each animal to dive under the water to bring up some muck, from which Waynaboojo would make the *New Earth*. Each animal tried and failed except muskrat, who gave his life in the effort. Turtle offered his back to receive the spreading muck and in this way Waynaboojo was able to fashion the new world, which the Potawatomi call Turtle Island [North America].⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Robert Sack, *A Geographical Guide to the Real and the Good* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 4.

⁴²⁴ Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places, Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1996), 106,107,109.

⁴²⁵ Patty Loew, "Hidden Transcripts in the Chippewa Treaty Rights Struggle: A Twice Told Story, Race, Resistance, and the Politics of Power," *American Indian Quarterly* vol. 21, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 713.

According to the belief systems of traditional Potawatomi, Lake Michigan became a place *before* human intervention; the intervention that took place was metaphysical and preceded human interaction – after the great flood and the renewal of the world on the back of the Great Turtle – all the ancestral lands of the Potawatomi became *place*. Similar to European perceptions of Pacific as being filled with small dots of land surrounded by a desert of water, the indigenous inhabitants of Oceania view their islands as interconnected and the water as highways rather than boundaries or borders.⁴²⁶ Thus, while non-Natives might see the Lake as space until it was filled in – for the Potawatomi it was already a place inhabited by the Potawatomi.

From the Potawatomi perspective, there was no difference between the dry place now called Chicago and the wet place now called Lake Michigan. It was all the ancestral place of the Potawatomi by the blessings of earlier primordial events. To the Indian inhabitants of the region, Chicago was a place long before Europeans claimed it by virtue of this supernatural intervention. While the “new world” to non-Natives was embodied in the discovery of the Western Hemisphere in 1492, to the Potawatomi, it had been a “new world” after the great flood told in their oral histories. It has been previously documented that the Potawatomi had specific ceremonies for beings living in the waters of Lake Michigan, the performance of which assured safety and balance for all.⁴²⁷ They are the

⁴²⁶ Epeli Hau`ofa, *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, ed. Eric Waddell. Vijay Naidu and Epeli Hau`ofa (Fiji: School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific in Association with Beake House, 1993).

⁴²⁷ “(A) ritual was held in honor of a mythical creature, prominent in the lore of the tribe, called Nambi-zac in Potawatomi and the “Underwater Panther” in English. Although generally considered an evil creature, the Underwater Panther is greatly feared and respected by all of the groups having the creature in their pantheon. Among the Ojibwa and Potawatomi the monster is especially venerated by the members of the Midewiwin or Grand Medicine society.” James H. Howard, “When They Worship the Underwater Panther: A Prairie Potawatomi Bundle Ceremony,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* vol. 16, no. 2 (Summer, 1960): 217-224.

stewards of the lakes as well and the lands of their ancestors. Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi women continue to care for the lake with prayer, ceremony, and activism.⁴²⁸

As noted in the Introduction, by the end of the 19th century, the Potawatomi had been forced from Chicago. After the Chicago Treaty of 1833 many had been removed to west of the Mississippi while others had fled to Wisconsin, Michigan and Canada. The Pokagon Potawatomi returned to Michigan, and remain the nearest Indian tribe to Chicago. The city and the region remained in the memory and imagination of the community. The lawsuit on behalf of the Pokagons argued, in short, that none of the land that now constituted the Chicago shoreline had been ceded in any of the treaties signed by the American Indians. That land, which was at the time of the treaties either lakebed, or infrequently exposed sandbar, had been filled in and had become dry land on which stood all sorts of buildings, parks, railroads, industries and residences. Since the Potawatomi had never ceded that lakebed and sandbar, the Indians were now asserting their ownership over the properties. The implications were stunning, to even the most casual observer. Imagine, if possible, a situation whereby essentially all the land east of Michigan Avenue would revert to the original indigenous inhabitants. The Pokagon Potawatomi aimed to become the richest landlords in Chicago history.

Clifton summarized the plaintiff Potawatomi's arguments as essentially this: (a) the Pokagon Potawatomi, (as the last remnants of the Potawatomi not removed west by the federal government), had a right to assert the claims of the Potawatomi People to the

⁴²⁸ According to the Mother Earth Water Walk Project "Two Anishinawbe Grandmothers, and a group of Anishinawbe Women and Men have taken action regarding the water issue by walking the perimeter of the Great Lakes. Along with a group of Anishinabe-que and supports, they walked around Lake Superior in 2003, around Lake Michigan in 2004, Lake Huron in 2005, Lake Ontario in 2006 and Lake Erie in 2007. A website describes their activities, http://motherearthwaterwalk.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=54 (accessed July 15, 2010).

lakefront, (b) that this previously submerged lakebed (and now reclaimed land) had never been ceded by treaty by the Indians to the federal government, (c) that since the United States had never properly acquired title to the lakefront, neither could the state of Illinois or any subsequent individual, institutions or corporations. Therefore, these lands now above water were owned by the Pokagon Potawatomi.⁴²⁹ Clifton concluded that, "...the brief presented and the attorneys' arguments (for the Potawatomi) were almost grotesquely faulty."

The serious defects in this argument are apparent, which attorneys for the defendants quickly pointed out. Aside from the fact that the lands involved did not exist during the treaty era at all, the ancestors of the Michigan Potawatomi had not used, resided on, or claimed ownership of even then adjacent tracts in that period. Moreover, the ancestors of the Pokagons were not parties to the treaties in which the adjacent dry-lands were ceded, which cessions the United States negotiated with the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi of the Illinois and Milwaukee Rivers. Thus twenty years of high hopes...were dashed, leaving behind only a residue of frustrations and bitterness at having been thwarted⁴³⁰

Indeed, the United States Supreme Court finally issued its opinion on January 8, 1917. After reviewing the claims of the Potawatomi, the Court concluded that based upon previous decisions of the Supreme Court, the only property right of the Potawatomi was one of occupancy,⁴³¹ and that the Potawatomi had long ago abandoned the right to any occupancy of the Chicago lakefront.⁴³² In his article "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar", Clifton wrote, "The (case) did not require much of the Court's time. It was promptly dismissed."⁴³³

⁴²⁹ Clifton, *The Pokagon Potawatomi, 1683-1983*, 115.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ *Johnson v. McIntosh*, 8 Wheat. 543 (1823).

⁴³² *Williams v. City of Chicago* (1917) 242 U.S. 434, 437-438.

⁴³³ Clifton, "Simon Pokagon's Sandbar: Potawatomi Claims to Chicago's Lakefront," 17.

According to Clifton, “the ancestors of the Michigan Potawatomi had not used, resided on, or claimed ownership of even the adjacent tracts in that period.” This assertion is dubious. I had been taught by my elders that clan and village affiliations among the Potawatomi had been stronger than any tie to a particular Band prior to the Chicago Treaty of 1833. According to Michael B. Williams, Potawatomi clan relations extended into and between all of the Potawatomi Bands at that time. Population and residence were very fluid.⁴³⁴ To try to now limit the Potawatomi to specific territories seems to be an effort at forcing Western concepts and ideas of community and nationality onto the Potawatomi; people who lived by their own notions of residence, territory locus, and allegiance. Potawatomi villages were inter and intra-tribal communities. What is more, the U.S. has often treated the Potawatomi as a unified nation.⁴³⁵ The Potawatomi felt a tie and connection to the land on which they and their fellow Potawatomi lived. So, perhaps the Pokagon Potawatomi could claim an ownership interest, as lawyers would call it, in the lakefront of Chicago. The Pokagon Potawatomi sued on behalf of themselves and all Potawatomi peoples.

⁴³⁴ Michael Williams papers. Mr. Williams was Secretary of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee when it filed suit for the Chicago lakefront. Throughout his life he was the acknowledged historian of the tribe, a popular public speaker, painstaking record keeper, tribal leader and advocate for tribal claims. While some of his conclusions are not possible to verify with other sources, they are a valuable transcription of the oral history of the community.

⁴³⁵ Throughout his correspondences and notes, Michael Williams writes that prior to contact with Europeans, the Potawatomi were unified peoples and that the claim of any branch of the Potawatomi is a claim available to all of the Potawatomi. Williams Papers. The Indians Claims Commission also concluded in the time period between the Treaty of Greenville in August of 1795 and the Treaty of Chicago in 1833, the Potawatomi were a single overall political entity known as the Potawatomi tribe or nation, with an overriding interest in all Potawatomi lands; that during this period the federal government recognized this fact and dealt with the Potawatomi as a single political entity; and that during this period, when a certain group of Potawatomi entered into a treaty with the United States, they acted on behalf of the whole Potawatomi nation or tribe. *Citizen Band of Potawatomi Indians v. Unites States*, Docket 71, et al., 27 Ind. Cl. Comm. 187 (1972). See also Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

In dismissing the legitimacy of the “Sandbar Case,” Clifton also said that “the ancestors of the Pokagons were not parties to the treaties in which the adjacent dry-lands were ceded,” but that is clearly not correct. The last of the treaties involving Chicago was the 1833 Treaty of Chicago. In that treaty, supplemental provisions between the United States and Leopold Pokagon’s Band made the Michigan Potawatomi parties to the entire treaty in apparent recognition that Potawatomi lands were the lands of all the Potawatomi, without regard to current location or Band. Thus, the Chicago lakefront could rightfully be called the territory of all of the Potawatomi, including the Pokagon Band.

Clifton’s characterizations of the Potawatomi claim raised questions that, as a lawyer, I thought might be explained in the court documents. If the Potawatomi lawsuit had been decided in the Tribe’s favor, would the case now occupy a place of honor alongside other cases in which other Indian tribes successfully asserted territorial claims? Falling back on my legal training and experience, I decided that if I were somehow able to gain access to “the pleadings” and the “briefs,” (what lawyers call the written arguments filed with a court), I could then analyze the arguments of the parties for cogency or speciousness. With that analysis, perhaps at least, then, I would have a better understanding of the legitimacy and importance of the claim.

I began my research while still at the University of Chicago, and I imagined applying for grants to secure funds to underwrite my travels to, and summer in, among other places, Washington, D.C. As luck would have it, the actual arguments of the Potawatomi, set down on paper more than eighty-five years ago, were sitting in a place called “The National Repository for Briefs filed before the United States Supreme

Court.” Ironically, this archive was located only a few hundred yards from where I had taken dozens of classes while earning my Masters degree. I went to Hutchins Hall and into the library located there, and excitedly requested the book. One of the student-clerks noticed my obvious excitement, and commented that they do not get much call for “those” books. I nodded. A few minutes later, I was blowing the dust off a thick old hardback volume containing the written arguments submitted by the lawyers for my Tribe. For the next several weeks, I read and reread the several hundred pages of arguments filed by the Plaintiffs and the Defendants in the case, both for and against the claim.

The lawsuits had taken more than three years, from its filing in the Federal District Court in 1914, until its conclusion in the Supreme Court on appeal; the arguments of the Plaintiff Potawatomi were submitted on May 15, 1915, by Attorney Jacob (J.G.) Grossberg. The Court’s decision was not published until 1917. In summary, the tribe acknowledged the precedent of *Johnson v. McIntosh* and the proposition that Indians in North America hold only a possessory interest (often call Indian or aboriginal title) in the land and a right of occupancy pending cession of any lands to the federal government. However, the tribe argued that the Treaty of Greenville (1795) subsequently gave the Native parties to the Treaty an ownership (fee) title to the land not ceded in that Treaty. That meant that the Potawatomi became the landowners of much of Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, including the Chicago region (excluding a six square mile parcel at the mouth of the Chicago River reserved what would include Fort Dearborn). The lawsuit continued with the argument that all of the subsequent land cession treaties entered into by the Potawatomi post-1795 that included the Chicago region used the then

existing shoreline of Lake Michigan as a boundary. None of those treaties ever ceded Lake Michigan. Therefore, the Potawatomi retained title to the lakebed and as it was filled in after 1871. New fill extending the shoreline east into the Lake was unceded territory and remained the property of the Potawatomi. The lawsuit sought either return of the lakefront or compensation for its taking.⁴³⁶

Conclusion

The legal and factual arguments of the Pokagon Band were thoughtful and thought provoking. Tribal elders had stepped up and asserted treaty rights, and had done so in a very public and forceful way. However, it is problematic that the Tribe did not actively include, as co-Plaintiffs, the other Bands of Potawatomi. Yet, there would be difficulties in getting so many parties to cooperate on such a substantial venture, particularly when financial resources were minimal in that era, contact was difficult, and some of the tribes had no operating government at the time. J. G. Grossberg's grandson wrote his grandfather's biography in 1994. In it, he included a chapter about Grossberg's involvement in the "Sandbar Case." As recounted in the biography,

One day in the year 1913 seven American Indians were ushered into J. G.'s office. The leader, Chief John Williams, explained that they represented the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Nation of Indians, and they were seeking redress for the unlawful annexation of certain lands along the shores of Lake Michigan.... In essence, the Indians claimed that the land along the shore of Lake Michigan, upon which were built expensive residences, a steel mill, parks, and tracks, and terminals of the Illinois Central Railroad, belonged to them. They had a case...J. G.'s contention was that since the treaty specified that the concession was of land westward from the Lake Michigan shoreline, when the city and the railroad filled in land east of the shoreline, they were encroaching on Indian land...⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ A detailed summary of the arguments of the Pokagon Potawatomi is attached as Appendix 5.1.

⁴³⁷ Edmund Jess Grossberg, *J.G.'s Legacy, with foreword by Walter Roth, President, Chicago Jewish Historical Society* (Glencoe, IL: Published by the Author, 1994).

During the October, 1916 term of the United States Supreme Court, Attorney Grossberg made his appeal on behalf of the Indians. The Justices must have had a difficult decision to make. On the one hand, they had the legal claim of the Indians versus the millions of dollars of property belonging to railroads, park districts, a steel company, and the City of Chicago. The Court concluded that the Treaty of Greenville did *not* give the Native signatories a fee title to the lands they retained. Under federal law, they retained only an aboriginal/Indian title to occupy and use the land and that right to possession has been abandoned.⁴³⁸

We think it entirely clear that this treaty [of Greenville] did not convey a fee-simple title to the Indians; that under it no tribe could claim more than the right of continued occupancy; that under this was abandoned, all legal right or interest which both tribe and its members had in the territory came to an end.

As Nicholas K. Blomley summarizes,

...concealed within legal thought and legal practice are a number of representations – or “geographies” – of the spaces of political, social and economic life. In much the same way the law relies in various ways on claims concerning history, so it both defines and draws upon a complex range of geographies and spatial understandings ... The legal representation of space must be seen as constituted by - and, in turn constitutive of - complex, normatively charged and often competing visions of social and political life under law ... Space, like law, is not an empty or objective category, but has a direct bearing on the way power is deployed and social life structured.⁴³⁹

The Potawatomi land claim was a collision of indigenous versus immigrant perceptions of the geographies of possession.⁴⁴⁰ Grossberg dryly commented, “How submerged lands can be ‘abandoned’ was not made clear.” He further noted, “...as the

⁴³⁸ *Williams v. Chicago*, (1917) 242 U.S. 434, 438. The Court cited to *Johnson v. McIntosh*, (1823) 8 Wheat. 543, 584, 586, 588; *Mitchel v. United States*, (1835) 9 Pet. 711, 745; *United States v. Cook*, (1873) 19 Wall. 591, 592, 22, and *Beecher v. Wetherby*, (1877) 95 U.S. 517, 525.

⁴³⁹ Nicholas K. Bromley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), Preface, xi-xii.

⁴⁴⁰ See Bromely, 51-56.

Indian tribes were wards of the nation...it is difficult to see how they could have voluntarily abandoned their claim...the law was with me but the Court was against me.”⁴⁴¹ Grossberg wrote in his brief to the United States Supreme Court: “The future historian who will compile a history of the treatment of the Red Man by this Government is likely to come upon this case.” His words were prophetic. The Potawatomi claim to the Chicago Lakefront deserved a second look. It received one very recently.

In the case of Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma versus Sean Logan, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, (2009) a case decided in by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, that tribe sued the State of Ohio claiming the Ohio DNR lacked the authority to regulate their fishing in Lake Erie.⁴⁴² The Court sided with the State of Ohio and relied heavily upon the US Supreme Court ruling in Williams v. City of Chicago (1917). The Court concluded that, as in Williams, the Indian tribe had never held fee title to the land, but only “Aboriginal/Indian title,”⁴⁴³ the right to occupancy of the land. When the land (or water) was abandoned, the federal government was free to take control and divvy it out to the States.⁴⁴⁴ In the Williams case, the Supreme Court determined the Potawatomi had abandoned the Chicago lakefront and likewise, here, the Circuit Court concluded that the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma “abandoned” any legal interest in the lands or water of Ohio when they were removed to Oklahoma in 1831.⁴⁴⁵ It would seem that Williams v. Chicago is settled law, and that any possibility of a successful claim to the lakefront is implausible. The price paid by the Potawatomi in losing their claim to the lakefront was

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² No. 08-3621, decided and filed August 18, 2009.

⁴⁴³ Johnson v. McIntosh, 8 Wheat. 543 (1823).

⁴⁴⁴ I am unable to ascertain at this time whether this decision will be appealed to a higher court.

⁴⁴⁵ Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma v. Logan, No. 08-3621, United States Court of Appeals, 6th Circ., Decided August 18, 2009, 7.

disappointment and disillusionment. Whether supported by the law or not, the making of the claim was an act of resistance to an American history that in the past has focused on Indian land cessions and relinquishment rather than struggle and recovery. The land claim to the lakefront had affirmed a Pokagon community memory and worldview reflecting an indigenous understanding of space and place that differed from the mainstream settler-colonists. As pointed out in a recent essay, whether or not Indian land claims are supported by the law,

...understandings of history shape perceptions of the present, and ...intensively pursued land claims can provide powerful challenges to inaccurate conceptions of the past...Native Americans are for this reason justified in strategically pursuing land claims that are difficult to justify on other grounds...⁴⁴⁶



Fig. 5.4: Potawatomi Indians gathered at Hartford, Michigan ⁴⁴⁷

The Pokagon Potawatomi land claim was an act of resistance to assimilation as well. Rather than meld into the mainstream society or hide in plain sight, the leadership

⁴⁴⁶ Burke A. Hendrix, "Memory in Native American Land Claims," *Political Theory* vol. 33, no. 6 (December 2005):763 – 785.

⁴⁴⁷ Group photograph of Potawatomi Indians at Rush Lake Mission near Hartford, Michigan, Sept. 4, 1906. Wis-Ki-Ge-Amatyuk, hereditary Principal Pipe carrier and ritual leader of the Potawatomi Indians, sits at center holding traditional Potawatomi pipes. Wis-Ki-Ge-Amatyuk was also known by his American name, John Buckshot. Photograph attributed to T.R. Hamilton. (Source: Gary Wis-Ki-Ge-Amatyuk, Jr., 2009), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 20540, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002716879/> (accessed March 1, 2011). According to Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member Tom Topash, his great grandmother Mary is in the white blouse next his great grandfather Tom Topash in the bowler hat. Tom Topash email to the author, March 7, 2011.

of the Pokagon asserted a bold claim for their territory; a claim that was grounded on tribal traditions and political activism. Although the dominant society may have paid little heed to the sovereign status of the Pokagon nation, Williams v. Chicago stands as a testament that these Indians were not relinquishing their status as separate and distinct peoples connected still to the ancestral territory of the Potawatomi peoples. In the next chapter, I will examine the similarities and contradictions between Native and non-Native claims to Chicago and why the claim of George W. Streeter is remembered while those of the Potawatomi are for the most part forgotten.

Chapter 6

The Legacies of Turner, Cody, Streeter, and the Pokagon Potawatomi

He recognized Chicago as Hustler Town from its first prairie morning as the city's fathers hustled the Pottawattomies down to their last moccasin. He recognized it, too, as another place: North Star to Jane Addams to Al Capone, to John Peter Altgeld as to Richard J. Daley, to Clarence Darrow as to Julius Hoffman. He saw it not so much as Janus-faced but as the carny freak show's two-headed boy, one noggin Neanderthal, the other noble-browed. You see, Nelson Algren was a street-corner comic as well as a poet. - Studs Terkel⁴⁴⁸

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have outlined the ways in which the Pokagon Potawatomi maintained a presence in Chicago, both physically and in memory. However, that is not to suggest that Chicagoans of today remember every significant assertion made by the Pokagon Potawatomi. In this chapter, I explore the competing claims of the Pokagon Potawatomi and others for the City's lakefront. The chapter contends with the highbrow and lowbrow understandings and articulations of frontier, settlement, conquest, civilization, and rights of discovery as advanced by Frederick Jackson Turner and William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody. The central theme of this chapter is an exploration of the reasons for the remembrance of a Yankee claims maker to the lakefront, while the claims of the Indians to the same lands is erased from the memory of Chicagoans.

Chicago is, as Terkel points out, a hustler town and one grand hustler was bold enough to make a claim to the City's most valuable real estate. The narrative that

⁴⁴⁸ Studs Terkel, "Introduction," in *Chicago, City on the Make*, Nelson Algren (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2-3.

included power and discovery, along with those elements that justified the very presence of the immigrant majority in the United States, would be turned on its head. This story begins in Chicago, specifically its lakefront. It includes strands that extend back to Michigan. Those paths also course upward towards notions of territory, justice and creation, and downward to the floor of Lake Michigan.

The Odyssey of George Wellington Streeter

Two events frame the factual parameters in this narrative of claims to territory in Chicago at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. They are: (1) the lawsuit (as outlined in the previous chapter) filed by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in 1914 claiming that the Chicago Lakefront was Indian land that had never been ceded by act or treaty,⁴⁴⁹ and (2) the arrival of George Wellington Streeter to Chicago in 1886 and the claims he proceeded to make to the same lakefront for the next thirty-five years. Taken together, the claims reveal much about territory, boundary, frontier, mapping, claims-making, history, memory, and how we imagine a past that operates to valorize some things, while erasing others.

The ground upon which the city of Chicago is built is a geography of contested land, beliefs, and value systems, and both claims rested upon the power of survey and map. What do these claims suggest about the power of maps, mapping and mapmaking? The stories of the land claims, when taken together and in context, have a common history, one of conflicts between rich and poor, landed and homeless, settler and dispossessed, White versus White, White versus Indian, and institutions versus individuals. The analysis of these conflicts reveals contradictions that beg explanation, if not reconciliation. In the nineteenth century, Chicago transformed from an indigenous

⁴⁴⁹ *Williams v. City of Chicago*, 242 U.S. 434 (1917).

community, to an early center of trade, to diasporic site for the Potawatomi, to an industrial capital possessed of enormous wealth alongside desperate poverty. Out of these contradictions and conflicts emerged not only the claims of the Potawatomi, but also the claim of a Yankee boatman possessed of his own notions of the doctrines of discovery and conquest. There are parallels between the emergence of Streeterville and the creation story of the Potawatomi Indians. As previously mentioned, the traditional Potawatomi belief is that that the world was consumed by a great flood and that Chicago, as well as the rest of North America, rests on the back of a turtle. Streeter's land claim also rose on topography that was once submerged and now arisen from beneath the water. Similarly, both stories are dismissed as myth. Few non-Natives accept the idea that the continent is atop the back of a turtle and at least two scholars have raised serious questions about the veracity of Streeter's story of running aground on a sandbar.

On July 10, 1886, George Wellington Streeter, known as "The Cap" by adversaries and admirers alike, ran his Lake Michigan boat onto a sandbar off the Chicago shore. A lawyer, Civil War veteran, boatman, and prodigious spokesman for the rights of the commoner, Streeter, according to legend, immediately saw an opportunity in this navigational disaster.⁴⁵⁰ Disembarking with his wife Maria he optimistically declared, so the tale goes, that fortune had shined down upon them and blessed them with a new home (albeit a shaky one).⁴⁵¹ The mythologies surrounding Streeter are as complex as they are entertaining, and separating fact from fiction is difficult. In many ways, the

⁴⁵⁰ Various versions of the scuttling of Streeter's boat and his resting on a sandbar a short distance north of the Chicago River are recited in K.C. Tessoroff, "Captain Streeter's District of Lake Michigan," *Chicago History* vo. 5, no. 3 (1976):155, Edward Bergstrom, Cap Streeter: Squatter King, *Tradition* vol. no. 10 (Oct. 1961): 23; Everett Guy Ballard, *Captain Streeter, Pioneer* (Chicago: Emery Publishing Service, 1914), 218 and Joseph Millard, *No Law But Their Own* (Evanston: Regency Books, 1963),120.

⁴⁵¹ Tessoroff, 155.

myths became more important than the facts as Streeter developed into a Chicago folk hero. Certainly, Streeter, and others who were financially and ideologically invested in his legend, encouraged the promotion of that myth. Streeter's adversaries developed their own rhetoric resisting the claims and actions of Streeter and his allies.

Streeter's tale may have been more manufactured romance and rhetoric than reality. A more recent, and much less dramatic, recitation of Streeter's involvement in the shaping of the Chicago lakefront is presented in an article by John W. Stamper.⁴⁵² Stamper argues that the development of the shoreline east of what is now Michigan Avenue was the result of the efforts of Lincoln Park Board of Commissioners and lakeshore property owners; that "George W. Streeter, responsible in legend for the landfill that is now Streeterville, was in fact little more than a nuisance to the tycoons and land barons who literally shaped the shoreline (of Chicago)."⁴⁵³ Stamper claims, in fact, that Streeter never beached his boat on any sandbar. Rather, Streeter and the *Reutan* docked at the foot of Superior Street, where it languished and was about to be destroyed by city officials, until Streeter obtained the permission of N. Kellogg Fairbank to haul it onto landfill being dumped in front of the lakefront property of that millionaire businessman. There it sat for five years, until 1891, when Fairbank finally asked Streeter to remove it, according to Stamper, at which time the Captain instead responded by claiming ownership of the area and selling lots.⁴⁵⁴ The questioning of the Streeter myth is not confined to contemporary writing; at least one newspaper article from the time also

⁴⁵² John W. Stamper, "Shaping Chicago's Shoreline," *Chicago History* vol. 14, no. 4, (1985-1986): 44-55. See also the recent article affirming the Stamper version of events in Joshua Salzman, "The Chicago Lakefront's Last Frontier, The Turnerian Mythology of Streeterville, 1886-1961," *Journal of Illinois History* vol. 9 (Autumn 2006): 201-202, 208.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*, 44.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 47.

appears to cast doubt on the Streeter sandbar story.⁴⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the vast majority of press at the time repeated the story as presented by Streeter as factual.

Stamper's version is certainly not the narrative that continues to capture the imaginations and sympathies of many Chicagoans. Streeter had apparently honed his skills of persuasion during his showman days, and he believed that the truth did not need to get in the way of a good story. Streeter also understood the power of a story that presented him as standing up against the wealthy and elite of Chicago. In the end, at least for Streeter, it made no difference whether his sandbar tale was fact or fiction. What mattered was that it resonated with the citizenry of Chicago and won the battle for public opinion. That public support would make tycoons and land barons, still nervous from the aftermath of the Haymarket Riots and other labor unrest, reluctant to engage Streeter head-on. Instead, they would engage in a strategy that combined intimidation, harassment, and litigation.⁴⁵⁶ Today, the version that remains most popular with the public and continues to reside in the historical memory of Chicagoans is Streeter's own version.

The Popular Version of Streeter in Chicago

An early record of the impressively named George Wellington Streeter is in the 1870 Federal Census, where he is listed as a resident of Genesee County, Michigan, with the profession of boatman.⁴⁵⁷ Much of Streeter's early biography comes from *Captain Streeter Pioneer*, by Everett Guy Ballard. Written as an interview with Streeter himself, it

⁴⁵⁵ Unidentified newspaper fragment from the Streeter Archive of the Chicago Public Library, "Streeter Legend Shattered, Famous Craft of the Captain Wrecked While Tied to a Pier," (Chicago? Unknown publisher and date).

⁴⁵⁶ Bergstrom, 23-27.

⁴⁵⁷ 1870 United States Federal Census, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Washington, DC, M 593_671, 309.

makes for fun reading, but its veracity is suspect (the author was also Streeter's lawyer).

Ballard presents a first meeting with Streeter, his subject's early years and ancestry, Streeter's childhood growing up in the Michigan wilderness, travels west, military service in the Civil War, attempts to succeed as a steamboat captain, time spent as a carnival show operator, and ultimately landing in Chicago and his battles for the lakefront and "rightful due."

Ballard's biography was published in 1914, and appears to have been part of a sort of public relations campaign designed to promote the reputation of Streeter and the claims of his supporters, including the author himself. The populist theme of the book is evident from the outset. The book was dedicated to "the memory of that great patriot and statesman, the Late Governor John P. Altgeld, who shortly before his death, requested that it be written." Altgeld had pardoned Streeter after his conviction for murder in 1902.⁴⁵⁸ Whether Altgeld actually asked that a biography of Streeter be written is unknown. Altgeld is best known as the man who pardoned the remaining defendants convicted of complicity in the death of seven police officers during the Haymarket Riot.⁴⁵⁹ While the Governor received considerable condemnation for the issuance of those pardons from conservatives and anti-labor unionists, Altgeld became a hero in populist and labor circles. Connecting Streeter with Altgeld may have been sleight of hand on Ballard's part, intended to curry the favor of anti-capitalists and to present

⁴⁵⁸ "Prison Is Streeter's Fate, Verdict of Guilty is Returned in the Kirk Murder Trial, Three Defendants Must Serve Terms, Jury Decides Upon Conviction for Manslaughter, 'Captain' Streeter Says That Millionaires Conspired Against Him," *Chicago Chronicle*, Dec 4, 1902,1.

⁴⁵⁹ According to Sawyers, On May 4, 1886, a crowd gathered in Haymarket Square on the near west side of Chicago to protest the treatment by police of striking workers at the McCormick Harvesting plant. During the gathering, someone threw a bomb into the crowd, which resulted in the death of a police officer. In a controversial trial, seven men were convicted and on November 11, 1887, four were executed. On June 26, 1893, Governor Altgeld pardoned the three remaining defendants. June Skinner Sawyers, *Chicago Portraits: Biographies of 250 Famous Chicagoans* (Chicago: Loyola University Press), 1991,11-12.

Streeter as a martyr-like figure. Certainly, Ballard's intent was to encourage sympathy for Streeter and outrage toward those who opposed his claims.⁴⁶⁰ Ballard's introduction includes the admonition,

(Streeter's adversaries) are conscienceless and inexorable outlaws whose only love is for dollars and luxuries. They have certainly enjoyed their fill, but the day of reckoning is at hand, and the American people will be as merciless and inexorable in their treatment of such scoundrels and inhuman monsters as any people who have ever lived in the past. The lion is only sleeping, but he will awake. I am going to give him a sharp prod and see what will happen.⁴⁶¹

The polemic that follows then weaves a tale of Streeter emphasizing his pioneer roots, veteran service, admirable character, courage, and strength. Streeter is presented in mythic proportions as a fearless nemesis to the wealthy of Chicago who would prosper at the expense of the average woman or man.

I know of no more grander or no more typical specimen of the real pioneer than Captain George Wellington Streeter. . . . and I know of no more formidable adversary to the Dollar Hogs of America, with whom he has grappled and battled at short range for more than a quarter of a century.⁴⁶²

Simon Pokagon possessed many of the same characteristics of self-promotion and flamboyance as George Streeter. According to Clifton, Simon Pokagon too, was "egocentric, autocratic and self-aggrandizing" to survive long as a political leader of the Pokagon Potawatomi Band of Indians.⁴⁶³ Without a doubt, both were showmen in their own right and charismatic characters.

While Streeter's early years are sketchy, the following information from biographies and news articles provides an outline of the life of the man who would

⁴⁶⁰ In dramatic flair, Ballard followed the dedication with a quote from Oliver Goldsmith, to-wit: "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey. Where wealth accumulates, and men decay." Ballard, 4.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 5-6.

⁴⁶² Ibid, 6.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, 14.

challenge Chicago.⁴⁶⁴ Streeter was one of eleven children, born near Flint, Michigan in 1837 to William and Catherine Streeter. His grandfather and great grandfather were veterans of the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War, respectively. By age eighteen, Streeter had earned enough money in the lumber business to marry his childhood sweetheart, Minnie. In 1860, suffering from wanderlust, he, along with his wife and two neighbors, struck out for the west. At some point, he apprenticed as a lawyer, and, although never making it a formal profession, he learned the law and the art of advocacy. By the time he appeared in Chicago, Streeter had honed his skills at showmanship, self-promotion and *flim-flam*boyanace. While out west, his lawyerly skills were tested when he was commandeered into defending a man charged with murder near Marysville, Kansas. Despite his best efforts, Streeter lost the case and the client was hanged. It would not be the last time the Captain entered a courtroom.

⁴⁶⁴ Scotti Cohn, "The Captain's War," in *It Happened in Chicago* (Guilford, Conn: Morris Book Publishing, 2009), 66-70; Ursula Bielski, *More Chicago Haunts, Scenes from Myth and Memory* (Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 2000), 296-300; June Skinner Sawyers, "The Eccentric Captain of Streeterville," in *Chicago Sketches, Urban Tales, Stories and Legends from Chicago History* (Chicago: Loyola Press/ Wild Onion Books, 1995), 9-40; Joseph Millard, "George Wellington Streeter – All This Out Here Is My Land," in *No Law But Their Own* (Evanston, IL: Regency Books, 1963), 111-158; Mrs. L. Edwards, *My Twenty Years Experience in Streeterville District of Lake Michigan* (Chicago?: 194?); Patricia Bronte, *Vittles and Vice* (Chicago: Henry Regency Company, 1952), 29-32; Lois Willie, *Forever Open, Clear and Free, The Struggle for Chicago's Lakefront* (Chicago: Henry Regency Co., 1972), 58-61; Francesca Miller, *The Sands, The Story of Chicago's Front Yard* (Chicago: Valentine-Newman Publishers, 1948); Robert Shackleton, "A Modern Corsair," in *The Book of Chicago* (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company, 1920), Chapter 13; Author unknown, "Captain George Wellington Streeter, Battling Hero of the 'Deestrick of Lake Michigan,'" *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 13, no. 4 (January 1921):571-574; Kenneth F. Broomell and Harlow M. Church, "Streeterville Saga," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 33, no. 2 (June 1940):153-165; Frederick D.C. Langdon, "The Wreck of the 'Reutan and What Came of It'," *The Wide World Magazine* vol. 7 (April-September, 1901): 539-543 and Edward B. Clark, "The Amazing History of the Streeterville War," *Women's Home Companion* vol. 29, no. 12, (December 1902).



Fig. 6.1: George Wellington Streeter by moonlight ⁴⁶⁵

With the commencement of the Civil War, George and Minnie Streeter returned to Michigan where he mustered into the Fifteenth Michigan volunteers at Flint. According to his biographers, he saw action in more than a dozen battles and acquitted himself well.⁴⁶⁶ Returning to Flint after the war, he convinced Minnie to go into show business. In the latter half of the 1860's, Streeter assembled a circus of "wild" animals native to Michigan, including an albino pig that he hawked as "a genuine white elephant."⁴⁶⁷ Assuming this is a fairly accurate rendition of Streeter's philosophy on "truth," it appears that the man was convinced that a good story, even if manufactured, was not problematic so long as the public was entertained. This same attitude would prevail in Streeter's pursuit of his land claims in Chicago. It was during this career as a

⁴⁶⁵ Portrait of Streeter in Ballard, "Frontispiece." This portrait of Streeter, likely drawn from one of the hundreds of photographs of him, reflects the mythmaking that transformed a small wiry man into the bayonet bearing defender of his abode.

⁴⁶⁶ Ballard devotes an entire chapter to his military service. Ballard, 131-178.

⁴⁶⁷ Millard, 115.

carnival barker that Streeter first donned what would become his signature costume, the ubiquitous silk stovepipe top hat and long green frock coat.

According to James W. Cook, such traveling exhibitions were common in 19th century America. Cook writes that showman P.T. Barnum was the most famous and adroit in this era at exhibiting curiosities and spectacles that challenged the audience to ascertain the legitimacy of what they were viewing. These exhibition frauds fooled some, but just as importantly, they intrigued many others bent on exposing the hoax. Either way, P.T. Barnum was a popular culture phenomena and hit.⁴⁶⁸ Streeter, first with his own traveling show, and later with his claim to the Chicago lakefront, arguably played the same game as Barnum. The audaciousness of his claims left both supporters and detractors with a measure of respect for his sheer brazenness even if also a bit incredulous.

The “George S. Wellington Shows” made good money the first year as a traveling circus and appeared headed for success until derailed by a disastrous rainy second season. By the fall of 1867, Streeter was bankrupt. He sold out and returned from the road with Minnie to Michigan and his old trade of lumbering. The next year, business was good, and Streeter built his first steamboat for travel on the Great Lakes. He sold that boat, took the profit, and headed south to St. Louis where he commenced construction of a second craft bearing the name *Minnie E. Streeter*, after his wife. Unfortunately, Minnie had other plans. Taking her husband’s seven hundred dollars in savings, she ventured forth to a career in vaudeville.⁴⁶⁹ The Captain maintained his composure, secured a divorce and

⁴⁶⁸ James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception, Playing With Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), Introduction.

⁴⁶⁹ According to the Ballard biography, “... during the winter of 1869 and 1870 I built a steamboat, and in the spring of the latter year christened her the ‘Minnie E. Streeter,’ in honor of my wife, who did not long

spent the next three years hauling goods up and down the Mississippi and Ohio rivers before calling it quits. Eager once again to head west, Streeter bounced from south Chicago to Bedford, Iowa running a string of enterprises.⁴⁷⁰ Bored again, in the mid-1870's he returned to Chicago and his showman roots, first buying an interest in the Woods Museum,⁴⁷¹ and then the Apollo Theatre.⁴⁷²

While in Chicago during this time, Captain Streeter met his soul mate, Maria Mulholland. Born in Belfast, she was as rowdy and outrageous as the Captain was, and together they made a partnership that fascinated Chicagoans for decades. Hard drinking and possessed of a fiery temper, Maria Streeter stood by her husband through the hardest years of what would come to be called the *Streeterville Wars*, until her death in 1905. After committing their lives to each other in a local saloon in 1885, the Streeters joined a gang of gunrunners transporting armaments to Honduran rebels. Maria and George went to work, and finally scouted a wreck of a boat docked near Chicago that they commenced to rehab. Working feverishly, they had her shipshape by the summer of 1886. Christened the *Reutan*, they planned to take her for a shakedown cruise before heading down the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico and on to Honduras and some easy money.⁴⁷³

thereafter honor me by her presence, for she decamped suddenly without notice ... and accepted an engagement on a vaudeville circuit." Ballard, 190.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, 210.

⁴⁷¹ Ballard, "quoting" Streeter, writes, "On my return to Chicago I ... finally purchased an interest in the old Woods Museum,' already famous as a place of local entertainment. During the six months that I was half owner of this place, such famous personages as ... Tenny C. Claflin ... (who) afterwards married a member of the English House of Lords ... She was one of the pioneer advocates of women suffrage, and created quite a future (sic) in Chicago when the doctrine was then new." Ibid, 210.

⁴⁷² A later biographer writes, "Cap Streeter quickly established himself as a raffish personality, circulating garrulously amid the bars and shores of the city's entertainment district. He was a rather small man, sporting a flowing red mane, shaggy eyebrows, and a mussy moustache, which framed a face turned brick red by prolonged exposure to the outdoor elements and indoor spirits. The wiry Streeter was a memorable sartorial spectacle in his ever-present top hat and the 'tobacco-stained, rusty green frock coat several sizes too large' that dangled from his lean shoulders to his ankles." Tessendorf, 153-154.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 154.

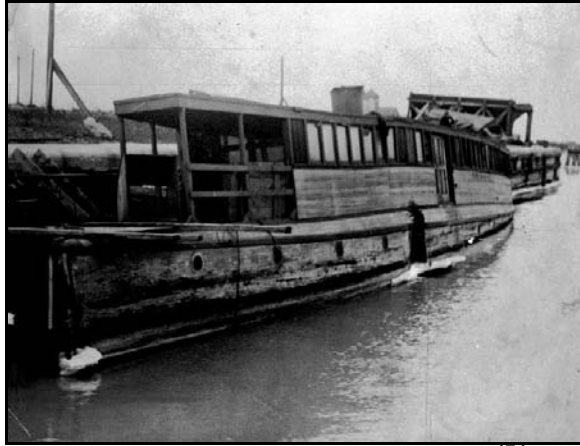


Fig. 6.2: Streeter's vessel *The Reutan*⁴⁷⁴

On July 10, Maria and Captain put out from Chicago for Milwaukee under dark and ominous skies. They encountered heavy gales all the way north and the foul weather continued on the return trip. According to Ballard's interview,

...the waves dashed over the boat hundreds of times with terrific force. I was the only man on deck. My wife and the crew were driven to the berths for safety, and I tied a strong rope about my waist and resolved to witness from the decks whatever happened. Twice I was swept overboard by the tremendous waves, but managed to climb back to deck overhand after the wave had receded...⁴⁷⁵

Streeter's reputation for courage and perseverance, carefully crafted by himself and his supporters, would be a common theme in the retelling of his landfall and subsequent activities. The Captain did his best to navigate the *Reutan* back to port in Chicago but by 10:00 PM, the engines had frozen up and the ship was adrift. At 3 AM, the boat grounded heavily onto a sandbar, one hundred and sixty feet offshore and just north of the mouth of the Chicago River. Later that morning, the Captain and his bride were able to disembark and inspect the damage. The ship was in bad shape, with more than a dozen holes in the hull, but the cabin was still reasonably intact. According to one version of the Streeter story, the Captain concluded, "Mebbe we ain't goin' to Honduras

⁴⁷⁴ *Detroit News* photograph of the *Reutan* circa 1918, negative in the collection of the author.

⁴⁷⁵ Ballard, 216.

at all, Maria. I like the feel of being on a boat and you been talkin' about someday settlin' down in a little house of our own. Looks like we got both right here."⁴⁷⁶ A later

biographer renders the decision to stay in more pragmatic terms,

...Cap Streeter pondered his cash reserve and his liabilities and decided to stay put. The storm had banked a soggy drift of sand around the sprung bulwarks of the *Reutan*. This promised a degree of temporary safety; the hulk might provide a rent-free shelter until something better turned up."⁴⁷⁷

After he set to making the cabin watertight, Mrs. Streeter commenced housekeeping. The Captain floated timbers out in order to surround and stabilize the sandbar. The bulwark not only protected their new home, but it had the added benefit of causing an accretion of more sand to their homestead sandbar. Within a few months, the situation was so stable that Streeter was able to jack the boat up off the sand and set in a foundation.⁴⁷⁸

By the summer of 1887, Captain Streeter was ready to add a front yard to his homestead. The shrewd showman convinced refuse haulers to *pay* for the privilege of dumping their loads to fill around the *Reutan*. Slowly the area between the sandbar and the shore closed in and after awhile Maria was able to walk from their houseboat to the lakefront along a wooden sidewalk that the Captain built for her. Meanwhile, Captain Streeter secured an old garbage scow and had it towed to their new estate to provide additional living space. Using his experience in lumber and construction, he perched a two-story home on top of the scow. He then pulled the *Reutan* off the sandbar, renamed her *Maria*, and began hauling passengers up and down the lake.⁴⁷⁹ Gawkers and tourists began visiting the lakefront to stare at the newly formed land and its appurtenances. The

⁴⁷⁶ Millard, 120.

⁴⁷⁷ Tessendorf, 155.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Ballard, 420.

narrative in the Ballard (auto)biography outlines the basis for Streeter's claim to this newly "created" land,

At the time of the relaunching of the vessel, I had filled in all of the space between my boat and the shore to the west and south and much farther to the northward, as well as more than thirty rods to the east and northeast. This was a territory of one hundred and eighty-six acres, long known to everybody in Chicago as 'Streeterville' and as the 'District of Lake Michigan,' the latter name having been given to the tract by myself, the former by the people of Chicago and vicinity because of *my creation, occupation and ownership of it* (Emphasis added). It bears both names to this day, not only among the people, but in the daily press, the public records and documents of the city, the county and the legislature of the state of Illinois."⁴⁸⁰

The process of filling and refilling, which Streeter probably contributed little, continued unabated for six years, while the entire city immersed itself in a building boom. Streeter had the entire area surveyed and mapped in 1893, facsimiles of which appear in the Ballard biography as well as in earlier pamphlets in support of Streeter.⁴⁸¹ The survey platted the territory into two hundred and eighty separate lots that Streeter commenced to rent or sell and the whole area was populated with an array of shacks and shanties, within a few years. Streeter and his supporters disseminated maps of their land claim through pamphlets, books, and legal pleadings.⁴⁸² The impulse to create and publicize these maps reflected the power of mapmaking in the promotion and legitimization of the boatman's claim.

Using that shoreline as a boundary, however, causes problems when it fluctuates. Such was the case with Chicago, whose lakefront was moved considerably eastward through the efforts of the City, and others, perhaps including George W. Streeter. In

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ballard, between 224 and 225; W.H. Niles, *A Brief History and Legal Standing of the District of Lake Michigan* (Chicago: Swanberg & Co., 1900), 15; W.H. Niles, *The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan* (Chicago: Hufford & Co., 1903), 24-25.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

many ways, the claim of the Potawatomi and the fight over Streeterville were both battles over maps. As others sought to plat, divide, and profit from the new Chicago lakefront, Streeter created his own map and argued that it showed the new lakefront area of Streeterville to be outside the boundaries and jurisdiction of Chicago and Illinois. To legitimize their claim, Streeter and his supporters began publishing copies of a map of the place Streeter dubbed “The District of Lake Michigan” as “proof” of their ownership. Streeter’s theory of property law was novel enough, and the power of maps strong enough that adjoining property owners, the press and the public were unsure of what to make of Streeter’s claim. It was a stroke of genius for Streeter to make such a claim by using the very tool that Europeans and Americans had been using for hundreds of years in order to take possession of territory in North America from the original inhabitants. First, you make a map. Then you claim what is on the map. The power of maps reflects the prevailing ideology that underpinned the settlement of the New World; that the world was a place open to taking so long as the appropriate rituals, formalities and conventions were followed. Streeter’s maps followed in this long tradition of cartographic imperialism.

The Potawatomi also used the processes of surveying and boundary making to argue that those lands “unmapped” remained the territory of the Tribe. In their pleadings to the Federal District Court filed in 1914, the Potawatomi submitted a map “showing the lines of the land ceded by the Treaty of St. Louis, Aug 6, 1816” (the treaty that included a cession by the Potawatomi of much of the lands comprising Chicago).⁴⁸³ That government map was introduced as evidence because it purported to show that the eastern boundary of the land cession by the Potawatomi in 1816 did not include the

⁴⁸³ *Williams v. City of Chicago* (1917).

lakefront of Chicago as it existed in 1914. Although both Streeter and the Potawatomi used maps to argue their claims, Streeter and his allies created their own map of Streeterville and published it as evidence of their sovereignty whereas the Potawatomi used an existing map to prove that their land fell outside of the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois. The difference reflects the difference in their perspectives. Streeter needed to create a map to confirm the territory that he claimed to have created. The Potawatomi, on the other hand, as original inhabitants of the region, sought to bolster their argument by showing their land claim existed outside of the government's mapped boundaries.

Ballard wrote of Streeter's first contact with his lakefront neighbors after he had mapped out his new land,

After I had virtually completed my filling-in operations...I had the tract surveyed and platted, and it was at this juncture that I learned of the displeasure of a lot of millionaires who imagined that the time was ripe to engineer a conspiracy to rob me of my hard earned property...At the time I was stranded, the location of some of the homes of the millionaire colony of the North Shore were not particularly valuable... the entire frontage...was low and swampy, and the location of the present palace or castle of the Palmer family was familiarly known as the 'stink pond' because of the universal use of the pond there to throw garbage and dead animals into...All this was later filled in, but it was for many years an undesirable locality.⁴⁸⁴

Streeter argued with the lakefront property owners over their relative title to this emerging landscape for the next thirty-five years, they asserting riparian ownership and he claiming squatter's rights, the right of discovery and the right of creation. Streeter's 1886 "landfall" came at an inopportune time for certain gentry of Chicago. Potter Palmer (whose name now adorns the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago) was moving himself north of the Chicago River, to what would become the new Gold Coast of Chicago

⁴⁸⁴ Ballard, 222-223.

adjacent to what is now Lakeshore Drive.⁴⁸⁵ Palmer, born of Quaker parents in 1826, had come to Chicago in 1852 to open a dry goods store.⁴⁸⁶ Four years later, he hired an assistant by the name of Marshall Field. By 1867, Palmer had made a fortune by combining quality merchandise with personal service and he sold his interest in the store to Field and others.⁴⁸⁷ Palmer took his profits and invested them in Chicago real estate, becoming the premier landlord and developer of the period. In 1868, he built the opulent Palmer House Hotel, which was rebuilt after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 in even grander style.⁴⁸⁸ In 1882, Palmer began buying up real estate along the marshy lakefront north of the Chicago River and had a mansion constructed for himself and his wife, Bertha Honoré Palmer. The mansion had three stories, three thousand feet of frontage facing Lake Michigan, a great hall, eighty-foot tower, marble mosaic floors and a grand oak staircase.⁴⁸⁹ Potter Palmer subdivided the immediate area around his home into spacious lots for similarly affluent Chicagoans and he eagerly went about making the development marketable.⁴⁹⁰ Because of his status and influence, the Palmer Castle, as it was known, became a catalyst in moving the City's elite from their previous loci on Prairie Avenue south of the central business district.

The Chicago lakefront was no stranger to controversy by the time Streeter arrived. Beginning in the 1830's, the shoreline of gathered driftwood, derelicts and shanties

⁴⁸⁵ The Palmer residence became an instant tourist attraction for the City and the center of social life of Chicago in the era of the Captains of Industry. A typical souvenir book of the period contains a color photo of the castle-like manor with the caption, "Mrs. Potter Palmer's Residence, Located on the Lake Shore Drive. One of the finest residences in the city." *Chicago, Souvenir of Chicago In Colors* (Chicago: V.O. Hammon Publishing Co., 1908).

⁴⁸⁶ June Skinner Sawyers, *Chicago Portraits: Biographies of 250 Famous Chicagoans* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1991), 202.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 202.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 202-203.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 201-203.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 203.

became a notorious red light district known as “The Sands”.⁴⁹¹ By the 1870’s, most of that had been cleared away by civic-minded reformers. During the 1880’s, Palmer joined with the City’s Lincoln Park Board of Commissioners to improve the lakefront and construct the new boulevard that would become Lakeshore Drive. The drive had been planned since 1875, and the Commission, comprised mostly of lakefront property owners intent on increasing the size and value of their properties, had been working to extend the lakefront east. In order to accomplish that, they had been issuing bonds, raising funds, and securing and filling the shoreline. Progress was slow, however, and a seawall had to be reconstructed several times.⁴⁹² Meanwhile, to the Board’s chagrin, Streeter had set up housekeeping just offshore.⁴⁹³ Streeter’s presence did not provoke formal action, however, until 1893, when N. Kellogg Fairbank, a neighbor of Palmer’s, sued successfully to have Streeter evicted. Streeter lost in court but simply returned and reestablished his shorefront colony. It was not until 1900, when Palmer consolidated his real estate holdings that he began to purchase the area claimed by Streeter. The Chicago Title and Trust Company insured the title to those lots and became the institution directly involved in further efforts at evicting “the Captain.”

⁴⁹¹ For a fascinating, albeit far from objective depiction of the place “where the Chicago River oozed into Lake Michigan (and) the Sands began,” see Francesca Falk Miller, *The Sands, The Story of Chicago’s Front Yard* (Chicago: Valentine-Newman Publishers, 1948).

⁴⁹² Stamper, 53.

⁴⁹³ Ballard, 220. Although born and raised in Michigan, Streeter was consistently portrayed as having a “foreign” accent and colorful oratory that added to his eccentricity and set him apart. For instance, in *Streeterspeak*, the area he claimed as his own was the “Deestrick” of Lake Michigan. Often times the press emphasized his accent as a part of the folklore/myth in their headlines. As examples, see “‘Captain’ Streeter’s Heirs Battle for ‘Deestrick’ Today, Appeal to Come Up In U.S. Court, Hundreds of Millions Involved, Widow Is Not Party to Suit, Fought for Fifty years, Recalls Old Houseboat and Shipwreck on Shore of Lake; Craft Sunk by the Police,” *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, Jan 3, 1928,1; “‘Deestrick’ Heirs Fight For Estate,” *The Chicago Daily News*, Jan 3, 1928,1; “Streeter Heirs Go To Court Jan 18 To Push Claim, ‘Captain’s’ Kin Want to Carry on Fight for ‘Deestrick,’ *Chicago Evening Post*, Jan 3, 1928,1; “Blow From Streeter Falls on Streeter, Three Claimants to 64 Lots in ‘Deestrick’ of Lake Michigan Will Sue; ‘Stolen’ Cries the ‘Cap,’ Deeds Which Are Basis of the Demand Declared ‘Illegally Obtained,’” *Chicago Record*, Jan 31, 1911, 3 and “Streeter’s Big Coup, Transfers Fight for ‘Deestrick of Lake Michigan’ to Milwaukee, In United States Court,” *Chicago Record-Examiner*, Aug 1, 1902, 1.

Significant similarities between Palmer and Streeter existed; both were “Yankee” entrepreneurs who had come to Chicago seeking their fortunes. Each was flamboyant in his own way, both were stubborn and persistent. Palmer had risen within the mercantile system to fabulous wealth although, admittedly, Streeter had not been so successful in his commercial pursuits. They were both attracted to the lakefront entrance to Chicago, but they had substantially differing opinions regarding the utilization of that space. Streeter’s conception harkened back to the frontier, it embodied the vision of earlier Americans who saw the continent as a place open to settlers willing to carve from nature an estate, no matter how large or small.⁴⁹⁴ Palmer was much more a product of the Gilded Age and the belief in capitalist savvy and spirit within which he thrived. Their legacies remain intertwined; the area where Palmer built his “castle” retains the name of the boatman land jumper, while the finest hotel in Streeterville carries the name of the capitalist.

Streeter’s claims cast a cloud upon the title of the lakefront lots and hampered their development.⁴⁹⁵ Over the years, the Chicago Title and Trust Company initiated several lawsuits to eject Streeter and his growing community. When the lawsuits didn’t work, they resorted to force, using the City police and mercenaries to motivate Streeter to move on, according to Streeter’s supporters. Streeter would have none of it. He continued

⁴⁹⁴ This kind of rhetoric is apparent in a piece of newspaper fragment in the Streeter Archives in the Special Collections at the Chicago Public Library. “‘New Pilgrim Home’ Is What Streeter Will Now Call District of Lake Michigan, Streeterville,” *Unidentified newspaper scrap*, May 6, 1902, 3.

⁴⁹⁵ “Court Rule Ends The Long Fought Streeter Case,” *The Chicago Evening Post*, Apr 18, 1928, 1. In reporting a dismissal of an appeal of a federal court denying the claim of the heirs, the *Evening Post* noted, “Capt. Streeter claimed the new land was his. Shore owners said it was theirs by virtue of riparian rights. Streeter’s claim was good enough to frighten off the title companies for a time. Also, it was good enough to secure him some financial backing.” Another example of the story that the Streeter claim had slowed development of the area is reflected in the news report, “Purchase of nine acres (for Northwestern University’s downtown campus) was made possible by the long retarded growth of this section of the lakefront called ‘Streeterville’.” *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov 22, 1926, 1.

claiming the lakefront until his death in 1921, and his heirs pressed their claims in the courts well into the 1930's.

Supporters of Streeter would join in the public discourse regarding the legitimacy of his ownership. One Mrs. L. Edwards "authored" a small book on behalf of the Streeter claim.

He was the only person that had any right to the district of Lake Michigan called 'Streeterville'. Three titles, Sovereign of the soil, Right of Discovery, and the *Indians gave him their deeds, which he paid them for*...Discovery, occupancy and accession, being the means by which Streeter obtained his title, as per custom followed the settlers of the United States generally, to-wit: the very moment the settler sets foot upon unoccupied, unsurveyed public land with purpose, in good faith to make his home thereon, and perfect his title thereto...There are a million people who saw Streeter in possession...his was the only right of *Preemption*.⁴⁹⁶ (First emphasis added).

At another point in her short essay, Mrs. Edwards acknowledges the interest of the indigenous inhabitants to the territory,

We find (Streeter) here occupying this 226 acres of land which had not been acquired by the United States at the time that Illinois was adopted as a state, into the Union in 1818, land with which the Indians had not parted title but which land by treaty, the Indians especially reserved to themselves under the provisions thereof, being the waters of Lake Michigan and 16 feet above the high water mark forever.⁴⁹⁷

Although that notation reads as though taken from legal pleadings, it is presented as the author's own. Nonetheless, whoever wrote that conclusion had an appreciation of what essentially formed the basis for the Potawatomi Indians' claim to the Chicago lakefront.

There is other evidence that Streeter and his supporters acknowledged the Potawatomi property rights to the lakefront. Streeter himself spoke of entering into

⁴⁹⁶ Edwards, 1, 16.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, 16.

“treaties” with the Potawatomi and purchasing the land from them.⁴⁹⁸ In 1902, Streeter even appeared on the stage with the “Indians.” The Chicago Daily Tribune reported,

Discoverer of District of Lake Michigan Appears in Vaudeville at the Metropolitan

...it is worth one’s while to see Capt. George Wellington Streeter on the vaudeville stage. The “Cap” made his debut last night at the Metropolitan theater...there were supposed Indians clad in red tights and green bodices who sang and danced to ragtime. The good ship Rutan (sic) bobbed up and down across the back of the stage while the thunder crashed, and suddenly “Cap” was spilled out of the storm-tossed lake onto the stage... The “Cap” came out of the lake with a telescope and a carpet bag exclaiming “Thank God, that is all I got from the wreck!” and after various spyings of the land he bought 160 acres from Chief Pokagon and proceeded to establish the “district of Lake Michigan.”⁴⁹⁹

Interviewed after opening night of the play, Streeter commented on the power of the stage.

Now take this play of mine. Ain’t that a moral document for human rights? Shows how I came into possession of the deestric and how I bought it from the Indians.⁵⁰⁰



Fig. 6.3: George and “Ma” Streeter at their lakefront home⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ Broomell and Church, 157.

⁴⁹⁹ “Cap” Streeter on the Stage,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1902, 4.

⁵⁰⁰ “Streeter Shows His Art,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1902, 3.

⁵⁰¹ *Detroit News* photograph of Streeter and wife circa 1918, negative in the collection of the author

Potter Palmer viewed the relatively uninhabited shoreline north of the Chicago River as an area of opportunity. He bought up the lots just west of Streeterville for a pittance and began constructing rows of fine townhouses, including his own baronial estate. Soon there was a rush among the social elite to rub elbows with each other and the lots and homes sold quickly at enormous profit.⁵⁰² Wealthy lakefront property owners like Palmer envisioned a shoreline that was within the jurisdiction of the city and incorporated into a state that was part of the federation comprising the United States. Streeter always argued that his District of Lake Michigan was also a part of the United States. Their visions of a united America may have been similar, but that was the end of their commonality. Palmer's imagined community, the Gold Coast, and Streeter's District of Lake Michigan rested on opposite poles of imaginings about America.

For Streeter, new neighbors on the north shore brought new problems and new complaints. The gentry did not appreciate their view of the lake being "marred" by the converted garbage scow, shanties, outhouses and throngs of workers and rowdies frequenting the Streeterville saloons. The silk-stocking set who would inhabit Palmer's newly created "Gold Coast," as it came to be called, paid a hefty sum to dwell among those they considered their peers. Having the motley crew who resided in Streeterville so nearby was a constant source of aggravation. With the financial crisis of 1893 settling in throughout America, the land barons and industrialists appear to have been reluctant to force Streeter's hand themselves. Mayor Harrison had been assassinated by a deranged

⁵⁰² "Although Lake Shore Drive in the 1890's was still home to fewer millionaires than Prairie Avenue, it quickly became the richest street on the North Side. It had many attractions: a view of Lake Michigan, the roar of the surf, and clean air. The Palmer mansion advertised the development of upper Lake Shore Drive. It attracted so much attention that Palmer could be choosy about buyers for his lots in the blocks north and south of him. He sold only to those he considered his peers, and thus the neighborhood became the most elegant part of town. Among those who bought property on or near Lake Shore Drive were ... Robert Todd Lincoln and Harold and Edith McCormick." Stamper, 53. The area quickly came to be called Chicago's "Gold Coast."

and disappointed office-seeker that year, the White City of the World's Columbian Exposition was soon crumbling after its closing and on July 5, 1894, the remaining buildings were burned to the ground by striking railway workers.⁵⁰³ It was a dicey time to be a "Captain of Industry;" the Captains needed a proxy to deal with the "Streeter problem" and the Chicago Title and Trust would do just fine.

The Chicago Trust and Title Company had been the guarantor of title for most of the Palmer lots; and for the rest of Streeter's life it would be the behemoth trying to squash his dreams.⁵⁰⁴ Established in 1847 as the Rees & Rucker Land Agency, it was renamed the Chicago Title and Trust Company (CT&T) in 1891.⁵⁰⁵ In 1888, the Company issued the first title guarantee policy in Illinois, protecting a property owner against loss if the title to his or her land was found to be defective or invalid. The CT&T had an important financial interest then, in clearing the cloud of Streeter and his land claims from the lakefront. The CT&T took the lead in pressing for eviction of the residents of Streeterville. According to Streeter, the Company had most of the judges and police in their hire and was not above employing thugs and assassins to do their work; every attempt to oust the residents from Streeterville was attributable to the CT&T or their minions. As the plaintiff in much of the litigation attempting to evict the Streeterville residents, the Trust Company did become a target of animosity for those who sought to preserve the Streeter enclave. Mrs. Edwards wrote in her short book describing her life in Streeterville,

⁵⁰³ Raymond D. Fogelson, "The Red Man in the White City," in *Columbian Consequences, The Spanish Borderlands in Pan-American Perspective* vol. 3, ed. David Hurst Thomas (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Press 1991), Chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁴ Edwards, 10.

⁵⁰⁵ CT&T website. <https://www.ctic.com/history3.asp> (accessed May 3 2010).

(T)he Chicago Title and Trust Company cannot give a clear title (to the lots in Streeterville). Any title they have to this property is an arrant forgery which should be straightened out, and have Uncle Sam padlock their doors. They are the biggest cut-throats and gangsters that ever infested the globe. I am writing facts that have heretofore been suppressed. They have their gunmen following me on the streets of Chicago for speaking about them. One of them said to me, 'We know you and are going to take you for a ride.' I said to him, 'I'm not afraid of you. I have only one ride to take. It will be my last one and yours too'.⁵⁰⁶

In the summer of 1895, the Captain was, legend has it, set upon by a group of roughnecks who had been paid, presumably by CT&T, to evict him and Maria and clear the area. According to the Streeter legend, they were no match for the couple, whose quick wits and loaded musket were said to have convinced the group to leave.⁵⁰⁷ Such sparring continued for several years. In 1898, the Chicago city police actually got involved while trying to serve an eviction notice, but they were driven off at gunpoint. The next month the local law enforcement returned with an arrest warrant for Streeter charging him with making an assault upon their fellow officers with a dangerous weapon. Maria was onto them, so the story goes, and she poured scalding water on their heads from the second floor of the scow until her husband could break free and chase them off with the musket. The officers returned with another warrant and finally convinced the old boatman to accompany them to the police station. Held overnight in jail, Streeter pled his case the next morning and persuaded the Court that a man's right to defend himself and his home prevailed, particularly because the police had acted without the benefit of a warrant during their first arrest attempt.⁵⁰⁸ "The Streeterville Wars" had begun.

One might question why the City of Chicago did not take a more active role in addressing the situation with Streeter. One reasonable speculation is that Streeter

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Sawyers, *Chicago Sketches*, 39.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

benefited from the political landscape of the time. For decades, the Chicago mayoral office was dominated by men who cultivated populist followings, and this may have made them reluctant to intervene publicly on behalf of a privileged few. Carter Henry Harrison was elected to four consecutive terms as Mayor of Chicago from 1879-1887. Known for his laissez-faire attitude towards government, his tenure was marked by the tolerance of saloons, brothels and gambling as a necessary part of urban life.⁵⁰⁹ The toleration of Streeter's antics by city officials was consistent with the tenor and politics of Chicago during that era.

Carter Harrison's son, William Henry Harrison II, also served four terms as Mayor, from 1897-1905 and 1911-1915. Like his father, he "did not believe in legislating public morality; he advocated instead a populist concept of 'personal liberty.'"⁵¹⁰ According to historian Edward R. Kantowicz, Harrison attracted a broad base of support, including laborers, immigrants and the wealthy; "equally at home in a poker game with party hacks or at a reception on the Gold Coast."⁵¹¹ William "Big Bill" Thompson was elected mayor three times, in 1915, 1919, and 1927.⁵¹² Rumored to be a close friend of Al Capone and other gangsters, during his final campaign Thompson promised to open ten thousand taverns for every one closed by the previous administration.⁵¹³ According to one biographer, racketeering became the biggest business in Chicago during his tenure.⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, 114-115.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, 116.

⁵¹¹ Edward R. Kantowicz, "Carter H. Harrison II: The Politics of Balance," in *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition*, ed. Paul M. Green and Melvin G. Holli (Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 1995).

⁵¹² Ibid, 251.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 252.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. For more information on ward politics of Chicago at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century's and the story of John "Bathhouse" Coughlin and Michael "Hinky Dink" Kenna, prototypes of the saloon keeper aldermen and influence peddlers of Chicago, see Herman Kogan & Lloyd

While Chicago had its share of reformers, the city exhibited ambivalence and some tolerance towards the kind of independence and individualism that was characteristic of Streeterville.

The story of old man Streeter and his wife getting over on their millionaire neighbors and the city police made good copy for the local press. Some reporters were openly sympathetic and the publicity even prompted the sale of a few more lots. Not long after, though, trouble returned when yet another group of thugs, presumably at the behest of adjoining property owners or the title company, showed up at the Streeter residence. Once again, legend has it that the old warrior moved too quickly and drove them off, bloodied and bruised.⁵¹⁵ The resulting publicity brought more newcomers to settle in the District. What Streeter needed now was compelling legal justification to maintain his fledgling community. Using the legal training of his youth, Streeter headed to the Cook County Courthouse. There, he discovered something as important as the original sandbar itself, a legal basis for his right of ownership that could be upheld by the courts.

Streeter's research revealed that President James Monroe had sent a government surveyor named John Wall to Illinois in 1821 to demarcate the state's boundaries. According to the official "map" of Illinois, its eastern boundary lay a few yards east of Michigan Avenue, at what was then the shoreline.⁵¹⁶ Streeter reasoned that everything east of the "Wall line" then was outside of Illinois. Returning home with this good news, Streeter told an assembled crowd of supporters that he had proof that they were outside the jurisdiction of Illinois and Chicago. Streeter never argued that his "District" was not a

Wendt, *Lords of the Levee, The Story of Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005).

⁵¹⁵ Tessendorf, 157.

⁵¹⁶ Michigan Avenue up to almost the end of the nineteenth century was known as Pine Street. Stamper, 46.

part of the United States, and even travelled to Washington D.C. to seek appointment as a Congressional representative. While reclamations of submerged lands certainly occurred elsewhere in the United States without a similar result as the Streeter claims, it seems that Streeterville was an odd confluence of the power of mapping, boundary, land cessions and personality that resulted in the unique Streeterville saga. The Captain announced to the crowd that they were in “The District of Lake Michigan” and subject only to the laws and jurisdiction of the federal government.⁵¹⁷ A constitutional convention was organized by the Streeterville residents and according to Streeter,

We established our government in the District of Lake Michigan without any flourish of authority or blare of trumpets, and, in fact, without any undue demonstration. One of my outhouses was converted into a temple of justice, and a sign place above its door proclaimed its august character. Our deliberations, elections, and other necessary assemblages were held in this building until the police authorities of Chicago regarded it with secret disfavor.⁵¹⁸

By acclamation of the citizenry assembled, the Captain became the first governor of the District. As the head of a sovereign government, he duly notified the city, state and national governments in writing of the District’s legal and political status and the newspapers reported the event widely.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁷ Millard, *No Law But Their Own*, 132.

⁵¹⁸ Tessoroff, “Captain Streeter’s District of Lake Michigan,” 157.

⁵¹⁹ Niles, *The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan*, 8-9.



Fig. 6.4: Caricature of G.W. Streeter⁵²⁰

Opportunity attracts opportunists, and the District was no exception. Early to arrive was a dashing young man named William H. Niles. Young, handsome, brash, and educated, Niles volunteered his military experience from five years of service in the U.S. army and convinced the initially ambivalent Captain to appoint him Military Governor of the District of Lake Michigan.⁵²¹ “Governor” Niles may have penned the following brief (auto)biography written in the third person and ascribed to an unidentified “publisher,”

Governor Niles was born in Lackawanna county (sic), Pennsylvania, March 4, 1860. He received a common school education. His early life on an Illinois farm and five years with the United States regulars laid the

⁵²⁰ Cartoon of Streeter in his omnipresent silk top hat. *The Chicago Daily News*, August 24 1901, 1.

⁵²¹ Later disputes in authority and strategy would emerge as evidenced by the following public statements of Niles. “February 16th, 1900, G.W. Streeter reports that he has collected money for taxes, about \$70.00, but none has been turned over to W. H. Niles for public use, and as W. H. Niles has received no money for taxes, therefore, in accordance with the act of January 8th, 1900, all lots upon which the taxes have not been paid ... are hereby declared to be the property of the Government of the District of Lake Michigan. May 26th, 1900, District of Lake Michigan. Know all men by these acts that W. H. Niles has this day on the soil of the District of Lake Michigan and by an armed assembly of the property holders, been nominated and elected Military Governor of the District of Lake Michigan for as long a time as a military government is necessary in the district by the unanimous vote of all the property holders present, with the power to do all things pertaining to the peace and prosperity of the district.” Niles, *A Brief History and the Legal Standing of the District of Lake Michigan*, 21. Streeter wrote of Niles, “... one of my warmest friends and defenders, William H. Niles, conceived the idea that he could declare himself military governor of the territory without the necessary appointment by the chief executive of the nation. In this move I had no part, and it was done without my knowledge or consent. I admired his nerve and fighting spirit, but I did not approve his judgment, for I knew full well that he was making a mistake from a legal standpoint. His declaration of authority over the territory, which was purely civil and had no relation whatever to the title to the land itself, was undertaken under the cover of darkness, which does not bode good to any cause.” Ballard, 264.

foundation for the strength and vigor which now mark his every movement and command.⁵²²

In 1899, “toughs” hired by North Shore property owners again invaded the District and commenced tearing down and burning everything in sight. Streeter, absent during the initial attack, returned as soon as news of the assault reached him. A battle waged across Streeterville for three days and nights. The newspapers took to calling it *The Streeterville Wars*⁵²³ and set up a War Correspondents’ camp. Immense crowds of supporters gathered at the border to cheer on the underdog District citizenry. As night fell on the third day Captain Streeter and his forces pulled back and the occupying hooligans ordered beer wagons in celebration. Once again, the wily boatman was ahead of them, and after letting them have their alcohol for a few hours, he and his followers were able to retake the District. Although victorious, the damage to the structures and spirit of the District was substantial.

A second constitutional convention was held in the District on April 5 of that year in order to formally (re)organize a government. One month later, on May 5, all of the citizens and a few hundred onlookers gathered for the raising of the American flag over the territory. Battles with police and thugs, however, continued unabated. An attorney hired by the Captain, carrying what Streeter said would have been irrefutable evidence of the legality of his claim, was murdered on his way back from Evanston, Illinois.⁵²⁴ On

⁵²² Niles, *The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan*, 4.

⁵²³ This article is typical of the casting of the land dispute in military terms, which was done both by the press and the supporters of Streeter: “Streeter War Looms Again, Ald. Cullerton’s Efforts to Secure Building Permit May Lead to Renewal of District Troubles,” *Chicago Journal*, March 4, 1902, 2.

⁵²⁴ Mrs. L. Edwards wrote, “Captain Streeter’s attorney, a man by the name of Ed Bailey, was waylaid and murdered on his way home from Evanston. Captain had sent him out to his friend’s house to get some valuable papers, some deeds. Captain often told me about it, as well as other people ... his dead body was found near Chicago on the outer drive. His pockets had been torn, his coat was open, and his papers were taken. Near his dead body lay a monkey wrench and his head had been split open. The stolen papers were used against Streeter at the trial where the deeds of Streeterville had been in dispute.” Edwards, 9.

May 25th, five hundred police officers massed at the border of Streeterville in order to clear the area, arrest the inhabitants, and end the dispute once and for all. George and Maria were on a tour of the city's saloons at the time, so Governor Niles rallied the citizenry into building breach works and palisades and commandeering cannon from the city parks to ream out and load with anything available. Typical of the press coverage of the battle for the District was one headline from the New York Times: "Chicago Has Real War, 300 Armed Policemen Sent to Capture Streeter's Force, Squatter's Followers, Backed by Gatlin Guns, Were Entrenched Land, But Surrendered"⁵²⁵

Thousands of Chicagoans rushed to the lakefront to witness the battle as George and Maria returned to discover their home had become a fortress. The first wave of invading officers was repelled with cannon fire. Near the end of the day, and to the rude mockery of the crowd, the police succeeded in arresting Captain Streeter, Niles, and most of the citizens of Streeterville. Streeter was released the next day on grounds that he had not participated in the insurrection. The others remained jailed for several months, until acquitted of anarchy and treason after a weeklong trial. In mid 1900, the Chicago police made another assault on Streeterville. Posing as sightseers, they succeeded in getting into the District and arresting the Captain and Maria. With the Streeters behind bars, resistance abated and the police concluded the day with a bonfire of shanty wood, furniture, furnishings, and other personal possessions. The Chicago papers declared the end of the Streeterville Wars.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁵ *New York Times*, May 27, 1900, 15.

⁵²⁶ "Drive Streeter Off Lake Front," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 21, 1901, 1.

They were not over. Unable to prevent their eviction, the group afterwards issued a “Declaration of Independence,” authored in large part by “Governor” Niles.⁵²⁷ The Declaration, dated May 26, 1900, recited the events of Streeter’s arrival to Chicago and the subsequent claim and development of the sandbar area as an independent territory. It continued with an urgent plea,

Declaration of Independence of the District of Lake Michigan...When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for any body of men to take up arms in defense of their property and legal rights, a cause must exist...And, whereas, these wealthy so-called ‘shore owners’ have used their social standing, political influence and blood money to control the courts, judges, and police of Chicago...And, whereas, they have conspired with the officials of the Chicago police force to use the criminal law to dispossess us of our property...and published...in the Chicago papers, that we would be shot, if we made any further trouble, and considering the armed mob against us, namely, the Chicago police force, and anticipating they will again invade our territory and tear down our flag, we are compelled to call for volunteers and we call upon all justice-loving American citizens to assist us with each armed and moral assistance as they may see fit, in putting a stop to the freedom of the foreign ‘cop’ whose services like the lawyers, judges, and legislators are for sale to the highest bidder, either for lawful or unlawful purposes...W. H. Niles, Military Governor, District of Lake Michigan.⁵²⁸

In 1901, the Streeters traveled to Washington D.C. and returned with what was purported to be a land grant to the District, issued to George W. Streeter and signed on behalf of President Grover Cleveland by his secretary. The only problem was it was immediately exposed as an obvious forgery and the Captain soon found himself under indictment.⁵²⁹ Streeter secured bail and returned home where a drunken mob, possibly recruited by the Chicago Title and Trust Company, and led by a ruffian named John Kirk,

⁵²⁷ A copy of the Declaration of Independence was published in Niles, *A Brief History and the Legal Standing of the District of Lake Michigan*, 2-4. In the booklet, Niles writes, “The object of this book will be to present to the **thinking** public a brief history of our case and to show we have been deprived of our property and political rights by the power of money.” Ibid, 1. (Emphasis original).

⁵²⁸ Ibid, 7-8.

⁵²⁹ “‘Captain’ Streeter Indicted,” *New York Times*, Feb. 1, 1902, 1. See also Salzman, 208.

showed up at Streeter's door. The only casualty in the skirmish that followed was Kirk, who was killed during an exchange of gunfire. Captain Streeter and two compatriots were arrested for murder. Press coverage of the affair continued to present the spin of Streeter.⁵³⁰ The public apparently was hungry for all the details of this dramatic turn of events and the Chicago newspapers were filled with front-page news of the battle.⁵³¹

It took almost a year for the matter to come to trial. Streeter was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment at the State's Prison in Joliet. Maria collapsed at the announcement of the verdict and died a few weeks later; Streeter blamed the judicial system for her death. During his incarceration, his sometime ally and sometime rival, William Niles, authored another pamphlet with the rather long title,

“The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan, Its legal standing as defined by Official letters and papers, by William H. Niles Military Governor – Captain George Streeter, the American Dreyfus, now in the States Prison at Joliet, Ill.”⁵³²

The reference to Dreyfus is to Alfred Dreyfus, the French Military officer who had been wrongfully convicted in 1894 of treason largely due to his being Jewish, and whose release from France's Devil's Island Prison became a worldwide cause. However,

⁵³⁰ “Women Hold For Streeter Disputed Land, Where Fatal Battle Took Place Last Night, Police Seek to Learn Who Started Fight, Each Side Accuses the Other; No Disinterested Witnesses Saw Opening Shot, Squatters Were in Ambush” *Chicago Evening American*, Jan 12, 1902, 1. The article, with details of the death of John Kirk, continues with the banner, “Their (the elite's) only hope to get possession of the property included within the boundaries of the District of Lake Michigan is to keep ‘Cap’ Streeter in jail or hang him. They will do neither ... the main conspirators were willing to sacrifice the life of one of their hirelings to land the Streeter forces behind bars ... — Statement by Captain George Wellington Streeter.”

⁵³¹ Examples include: “Here Is A Diagram Illustrating The Streeterville Shooting And A Picture Of The Scene Of The Fight,” *Hearst's Chicago American*, Feb 12, 1902, 1; “To Corner Streeter, Authorities Will Push Murder Prosecution Against Lake Front Claimant, Exemption Plea Ignored, Evidence Secured That Captain Was an Active Combatant in the Battle, land Claimed By ‘Captain’ Streeter – Scene of Tuesday Night's Tragedy,” *The Chicago Record-Herald*, Feb 12, 1902, 1; “Streeter Guards Kill An ‘Invader’, Pitched Battle In the Dark, Forces Line Up and Send Bullet After Bullet Through the Night Shadows,” *Chicago Accord Herald*, Feb 2, 1902, 1.

⁵³² Niles, *The Military Government of the District of Lake Michigan, Its legal standing as defined by Official letters and papers, by William H. Niles Military Governor – Captain George Streeter, the American Dreyfus, now in the States Prison at Joliet, Ill.*, 44.

in the pamphlet, Niles accused Streeter of being involved in fraud, selling and reselling lots.

During (Streeter's) trial it was proven that he had sold one lot fourteen Times and it is evident that he sold every lot in the District over three or four times...this is why he is so opposed to the military government being established in the District.⁵³³

Nonetheless, in a more sympathetic tone later in the same document, Niles wrote, "...of course the same influence that sent Streeter to jail will keep him there, for the Board of Pardons owe their political positions to his enemies. Also the fact that a petition for his pardon and signed by 50,000 citizens of Chicago has no effect on the Board of Pardons or the Governor of Illinois."

Astonishingly, nine months after his conviction, the Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld issued Streeter a full pardon and he went free.⁵³⁴ Altgeld, a Democrat who authored *Our Penal Machinery and Its Victims*, a man branded a socialist, was as we have seen, a supporter of radical causes.⁵³⁵ Vilified by the press during his lifetime, he became a symbol of good government after his death.⁵³⁶ By 1902, the press was *not* dismissing Streeter's claim out of hand, unlike the press' treatment of the Potawatomi claim for the lakefront. (See Chapter Four for details of the news coverage of the Potawatomi claim). Some of the news coverage of Streeter and his allies even questioned the ownership interests of the North Shore property owners.⁵³⁷

After his release from the penitentiary, Streeter returned to the District in 1903 and built a brick home, but the flurry of lawsuits over the land continued and additional

⁵³³ Ibid, 45.

⁵³⁴ Sawyers, *Chicago Sketches*; 38.

⁵³⁵ Sawyers, *Chicago Portraits*; 11-12.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ "Is This \$25,000,000 Tract Ownerless? – Cap'n Streeter's Claim," *Chicago Daily Morning*, March 9, 1902,1 and "Who Owns the Lake Front and Other Chicago Gossip," *Pekin ILL Times*, Feb 20, 1902, 1.

parties joined the fray, including the family of one of the first White settlers of Chicago, Robert Kinzie. At age sixty-nine, George Streeter remarried and brought to the District his new bride, thirty-six year old Alma Lockwood of Wakarusa, Indiana. The new Mrs. Streeter settled into her role as defender of her husband and his dreams, and in return the Captain affectionately called her 'Ma'.



Fig. 6.5: Streeter in repose⁵³⁸

Little in the situation changed until World War I when a new ordinance was enacted by the city council closing the City's taverns on Sundays. The Streeters saw a unique business opportunity and soon liquor was flowing seven days a week in Streeterville. More battles and arrests ensued. In 1915, the police invaded the territory and cleared the area one last time.

A photographer for the Chicago Tribune took a picture of Cap, his little fox terrier, Spot, his wife and (their longtime friend) Mrs. Eddie, [presumably the Mrs. L. Edwards who authored the tract previously mentioned] seated on boxes in front of the fire with their belongings piled in the street behind. The picture was blown up and run the next morning with the headline "CAP'S DREAMS AGAIN GO UP IN SMOKE. More

⁵³⁸ George Wellington Streeter, *American Memory*, Digital ID: ichicdn n000325. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.ndlpcoop/ichicdn.n000325> (accessed October 25, 2010).

than one Chicagoan, looking at the pathetic group, swallowed a lump in his throat and cursed the rich.⁵³⁹

Later that year the courts finally ruled against Streeter and dismissed any claim that he had to the land. He got another boat and tied it to the municipal pier and with ‘Ma’ they made ends meet by selling coffee and hot dogs. On January 22, 1921, sick with an infected eye and pneumonia, Captain Streeter died at the age of eighty-four. The obituaries for Streeter reflect some of the valorization of Streeter that had occurred in the papers over the preceding thirty-five years.⁵⁴⁰

“Ma” Streeter and the Streeter heirs tried to carry on the fight, but she died on October 19, 1936 at the age of sixty-six. The newspapers presented her in a nostalgic light and emphasized her meager circumstances at the time of her death.⁵⁴¹ In her obituary in the Los Angeles Times, Streeter’s widow was described as “the Empress of Streeterville.”⁵⁴² This reflected a penchant of the participants in the Streeterville drama to

⁵³⁹ Millard, 156.

⁵⁴⁰ “Fighting ‘Cap’ Streeter Dead, End Comes for Aged Squatter on Houseboat, Battled for Years to Enforce Claim to 186 Acres on ‘Gold Coast’, “Squatter’s spectacular career full of clashes with armed forces of the law, (widow) plans to carry on fight, (Streeter) often arrested as bootlegger, tribute from opposing counsel.” *The Chicago Daily Journal*, Jan 24, 1921, 1. The article concludes: “Capt. Streeter was one of the most picturesque characters Chicago has ever produced, and his death will remove one of the most constant sources of entertainment the courts have had” said Robert Humphrey, an attorney for the Chicago Title and Trust company, which contested to annul the captain’s claims in Streeterville property. ‘His opponents must admit that he has been a game and persistent fighter’.” See also “Noted ‘Mayor’ Is Dead, Capt. Streeter, Who Carried on a Long Fight for Land, Passes Away,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 25, 1921, 11.

⁵⁴¹ In this article featuring a photograph of a coy looking “Ma”, Streeter’s widow is described as having at her ready “shotgun and bulldogs to battle for her rights.” “Captain’ Streeter’s Heirs Battle for ‘Deestric’ Today, Appeal to Come Up In U.S. Court, Hundreds of Millions Involved, Widow Is Not Party to Suit; Fought for Fifty years, Recalls Old Houseboat and Shipwreck on Shore of Lake; Craft Sunk by the Police,” *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, Jan 3, 1928,1, In a subsequent article in the same newspaper, “Ma’ Streeter Ready to Battle Invaders,” *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, Jul 28, 1922, 1, the writer notes that “(The Captain’s) last words to ‘Ma’ Streeter and other heirs were, ‘Keep up the faith. Don’t give up the ship.’ They are fulfilling his adjurations.” See also “Labor Seeks Site in Streeterville, Backs Fight of Captain’s Widow on Promise of Land Bequest,” *Chicago Daily News*, April 5, 1928, 1. The articles announces, “Inspired by the deeding of a considerable plot of land for a proposed ‘labor temple’ and a permanent home for the WCFL (Chicago Federation of Labor) in what is known as ‘Streeterville’, on the near north side, labor delegates present took up the Streeter cause with a whoop of delight at the picture of a state ‘temple’ in the midst of that exclusive settlement.”

⁵⁴² “Death Comes to ‘Ma’ Streeter,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 19, 1936, 9.

claim titles of legitimacy that were repeated in the press. “Captain,” emphasized Streeter’s authority and experience, “Mayor” and “Empress” was indicative of their status as leaders of a sovereign entity, “Ma” as reflecting her maternal role over the District, and “Governor” when William Niles promoted his own authority over the District. Even when repeated tongue-in-cheek, the titles confirmed their public identities and achieved-ascribed statuses. “Ma” Streeter, in particular, was eulogized for her devotion to her husband and his dreams despite the hardships they endured.⁵⁴³

The Streeter's epic battles are immortalized, curiously enough, in the naming of a restaurant, a neighborhood, and a city street after them.⁵⁴⁴ Once gone, the city celebrated their eccentricities and glossed over the deeper meaning in what they and their allies had promoted as a crusade against the wealthy. Their battle for Streeterville reflected divisions of class and identity at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, in Chicago and the rest of the nation. The naming of the “Streeterville” neighborhood is also reminiscent of the way Indian names were used by settlers to name the American landscape after removal of most of the Indians themselves from the territory.

In reports that spanned over forty years, the Streeters earned a substantial amount of publicity in the popular press. Whether good, bad, or indifferent, the news stories conveyed and perpetuated a folksy mythology, an ideology and hegemony of an America

⁵⁴³ “‘Ma’ Streeter Dies; Claimed Millions, Shouldered Shotgun to Help Squatter Husband Defend Chicago Lake Front, Had Planned a Utopia, But Courts Held Her ‘Sovereign State’ Did Not Exist – Had Peddled Aprons for Living,” *New York Times*, Oct 19, 1936, 19, “‘Ma’ Streeter Dies in Chicago, Destitute, Alone, Helped Husband Fight for \$350,000,000 Gold Coast Property,” *The Washington Post*, Oct 18, 1936, 24.

⁵⁴⁴ As previously mentioned, the so-called *Gold Coast* of Chicago, the wealthiest residential neighborhood in the city retains the unofficial designation of *Streeterville*. During a recent rehab of Navy Pier, one of the service drives was christened Streeter Drive. In the 1980’s, one of the restaurants at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago was named “Captain Streeters.” (Oddly enough, it advertised as specializing in Mexican fare). “Display Ad,” *New York Times*, Jun 19, 1980, 207.

where a ne'er-do-well and his supportive wife were championed as underdogs, even though the likelihood of their success was, if not minimal, then minimized. Much of his success in staying in the public imagination must be ascribed to Streeter himself, who for decades displayed a *Barnumesque* ability to put on a show and give his audience the story they wanted. In the end, however, the newspapers confirmed the roles of other institutional forces including corporations, police, and courts that in the end denied Streeter or his heirs any claim to the sandbar at the foot of Chicago.

The Potawatomi and George Wellington Streeter crossed paths on numerous occasions throughout Streeter's lifetime. As recounted in his primary biography, as a child in Michigan, Streeter played with other children who were Indian.⁵⁴⁵ After Streeter returned to Chicago he told of another connection to his neighboring Potawatomi,

At one time about fifty Siberians who were on their way to the neighborhood of Houghton Lake (Michigan), where they had purchased considerable land, asked permission to camp on my premises for a few days in order to rest their tired horses and to recuperate a little themselves. I had no objection whatever, and in fact, was pleased to accommodate them, so they settled down peacefully on my homestead without any sort of demonstration whatever. Not long after a swarm of policemen came buzzing curiously about the camp, thinking, as I afterward learned, that these poor people were Indians. Knowing that the Pottawatomies were friends of mine, by a great flight of imagination, they came to the conclusion that the Pottawatomies were on deck to aid me in some unknown scheme.⁵⁴⁶

Although no specific date is given for this event, it appears to have been close to the time when Charles Pokagon, Chairman of the Business Committee of the Pokagon Band of

⁵⁴⁵ Ballard, 106.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, 267-268.

Potawatomi Indians, was announcing to the newspapers the tribe's intent to move to the lakefront of Chicago and secure their claim to the unceded shoreline.⁵⁴⁷

As noted earlier, Mrs. Edwards asserted in her treatise that the Indians had sold their right and title to the lakefront to Streeter. Yet the incident points to an understanding, by at least some of the *Streeterites*, that if the lands east of the Wall line were not within the jurisdiction of the State of Illinois, then their ownership resided with the original inhabitants of the land, the Potawatomi, until such time as they were divested of such title.⁵⁴⁸ The Streeter claim was a counterpart to Indian claims to the same territory; like the Indians, he argued that the newly unsubmerged lakefront was not part of Illinois, then asserting, unlike the Potawatomi, the ideology that it therefore was terra nullius and "vacant" land subject to settler-homesteading in the grand American tradition of manifest destiny.⁵⁴⁹

The Economies of Streeter and the Potawatomi

... somewhere between the bright carnival of the boulevards and the dark girders of the El, ever so far and ever so faintly between the still grasses and the moving waters, clear as a cat's cry on a midnight wind, the

⁵⁴⁷ See for instance "Indians to Take Lakefront, Pottawatomies Decide to Go to Chicago and Occupy the Disputed Land," *The Washington Post*, June, 8, 1901, 1.

⁵⁴⁸ Streeter and his advocates circumvent the argument that the Federal Trade and Intercourse Acts and the holding of the United States Supreme Court in *Johnson v. McIntosh*, (1823), which made clear that Indian tribes have no authority to sell land to individuals, only to the federal government, and that any individual sale is void on its face) by arguing, like the Potawatomi did in their suit, that the Treaty of Greenville (1795) gave the Indians a fee title to the unceded lands, including Chicago, which could then be sold to individuals.

⁵⁴⁹ Beginning in 1862, the United States passed a series of laws that allowed for citizens to gain title to parcels of land in exchange for settling upon and improving that land. This mixture of habitation and labor was seen as legitimizing the claim to the land. Earlier, preemption acts had pointed in the same direction. The ideology dated to the eighteenth century. Robert Maxwell Brown details the homestead ethic that was the underpinning of the ideology of settler privilege in the United States. Robert Maxwell Brown, "Backcountry Rebellions and the Homestead Ethic in America, 1740-1799," in *Tradition, Conflict, and Modernization; Perspectives on the American Revolution*, ed. Robert Maxwell Brown and Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 73-98. See also Stephen Aron, "Pioneers and Profiteers; Land Speculation and the Homestead Ethic in Frontier Kentucky," *Western Historical Quarterly* vol. 23, no. 2 (May 1992):179-198, 181.

Pottawattomies mourn in the river reeds once more. The Pottawattomies
were much too square. They left nothing behind but their dirty river.
- Nelson Algren⁵⁵⁰

The Potawatomi lawsuit made no mention of Streeter and his parallel claim to the Chicago lakefront. Yet, in private correspondence decades later, Michael Williams, the Secretary of the Tribe at the time of the lawsuit, opined that had Streeter allied himself with the Potawatomi, he might have been successful in his claim. Williams wrote,

I repeat what I once said to you in time past. It is regrettable that “Cap” Streeter was so full of the spirit of physical combativeness he could not see the importance of joining forces with the Indians in the endeavor to resolve the lake front controversy. Together, the two line ups: Streeter’s priority of occupancy and the Indians with their unrelinquished titles and rights.⁵⁵¹

In the ambitiously titled pamphlet, “The Greatest Conspiracy Ever Conceived,” authors and allies of the Potawatomi, W. H. Cox and W. E. Johnson outlined in fifty-two pages why the Potawatomi were the rightful owners to the Chicago lakefront.⁵⁵² It is the same kind of diatribe as those authored by the supporters of Streeter, the arguments are very similar, and their efforts kept the local printers busy. Cox held a quitclaim deed from Simon Pokagon to the lakefront, so the effort appears self-serving since he could argue that he now owned the Indians interests if their cause prevailed. Still, many of Streeter’s supporters were also positioned to benefit financially had his claim been successful. Streeter and the Tribe both found themselves in the middle of claims that had far-reaching and substantial implications for supporters and foes alike. While there is scant

⁵⁵⁰ Algren, 77.

⁵⁵¹ Correspondence from Michael Williams to C. E. Caple of Los Angeles, CA. dated September 2, 1964. Michael Williams papers.

⁵⁵² W. H. Cox and W. E. Johnson, *The Greatest Conspiracy Ever Conceived, By any class of human beings in this Conspiracy, by a class of people who are devising by every way and means illegal and unjust to rob the legal owners of their Chicago Lake Front Lands and of their title and rights to quiet possession secured to them by treaty with the United States* (Chicago: publisher unknown, December, 1908). This treatise was found in the Michael Williams papers.

evidence that Streeter and the Potawatomi ever cooperated with each other, they both contributed to the vitality and economy of Chicago by keeping an army of police, lawyers and judges busy and providing the fodder to sell a large volume of newspapers detailing their latest activities. The Streeter and Potawatomi claims were even occasionally connected in the press of the day. Representative was this report from 1901,

Indian Invasion A Dream

“Letter from Dowagiac Mich., Announces That Talk of Pottawattomies Trying to Enforce Claims to Lake Shore is 'Moonshine.' Streeter Would Welcome Allies In the mean time Captain Streeter has announced That he will welcome the Indians if they as allies, and give them all aid and assistance and a safe harborage in the 'District of Lake Michigan.'” ...⁵⁵³

While the claims of Streeter and the Potawatomi are often cast in an atmosphere of paucity and impoverishment, in fact, Streeter and the Potawatomi appear to have done very well financially, even though neither were successful in the courts. Many of the army of defenders of the District of Lake Michigan and Streeter were in fact lot owners who had purchased the land from Streeter.⁵⁵⁴ One report even suggested that Streeter had sold lots to the very Chicago police charged with keeping him under control.⁵⁵⁵ Another report announced that Streeter had sold one lakefront parcel for \$30,000.00 and calculated the remaining Streeter lots of having a total value of \$300,000.00.⁵⁵⁶ After his death on January 29, 1923, “The Captain”,

...lay in state for three hours in Grace Methodist church...while hundreds of persons paid their last tribute, the old hat reposed beside him in the coffin...Reverend Raymond L. Seamans, pastor of the church, preached the funeral sermon, following which the body was taken to Graceland Cemetery for internment. The Active pallbearers were all members of the Lake Michigan Land Association, while the honorary pallbearers were the Captain's old comrades in the Civil War. More than forty automobiles,

⁵⁵³ "Indian Invasion A Dream," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 30, 1901, 9.

⁵⁵⁴ Salzman, footnote 38.

⁵⁵⁵ "Streeter Sells to the Police, Thirty Patrolmen Are Purchasers of Lots in His "District of Lake Michigan," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 13, 1900, 1.

⁵⁵⁶ "Capt. Streeter in Luck, A Shipwreck Caused Him To Blossom Out As A Capitalist," *The New York Times*, December 4, 1892, 1.

carrying members of the Association and the Grand Army members, followed the hearse to the Cemetery.⁵⁵⁷



Fig. 6.6: Pallbearers at the funeral for George W. Streeter⁵⁵⁸

As previously noted, Simon Pokagon appears to have sold his own interests to the lakefront to speculators, and the tribal Business Committee minutes reflect the payment of some \$33,900 to the tribe, either as an advance on, or a sale of, the lakefront claim. Tribal members received \$100 each for their share of the lakefront.⁵⁵⁹ One newspaper of the time reported that purchaser, Robert A. Bines, of Chicago, and the Business Committee agreed that each member of the tribe would receive \$1,000 “in the event of the successful outcome of the claim...”⁵⁶⁰ The article continued with an account of the Indians enjoying their new wealth,

Within an hour the joyful news had spread to every member of the tribe that had camped about Dowagiac for the last three days...Indians who had not exchanged greetings since the government paid them five years ago held reunions on every street corner. The squaws and papooses hung together while the braves and old men held pow wows and exchanged tobacco. The pipe of peace, which was represented by a cheap cigar, was handed about,

⁵⁵⁷ Editorial, “Captain George Wellington Streeter,” *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* vol. 13, no. 4 (January, 1922): 571-574, 574.

⁵⁵⁸ Broomwell and Church, between pages 164-165.

⁵⁵⁹ “Indians Sell Chicago Claims, Robert Bines of This City Buys Supposed Rights of Pottawatomies to Lake Shore Land, Pays \$100 To Each One,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 18, 1902, 1. Minutes of the Business Committee appear to confirm that they entered into a contract with Bines and were paid a lump sum of \$33,900.00 by him. Minutes of the Pokagon Potawatomi Business Committee, June 22, 1902, Williams papers.

⁵⁶⁰ “Indians Sell Chicago Claim, Robert Bines of This City Buys Supposed Rights of Pottawatomies to Lake Shore Land, Pays \$100 to Each One,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 18, 1902, 1.

while the smokers talked of the probabilities of the wheat and corn crops and of the awful possibility of the money never being paid. There was but little drinking; not an Indian was arrested...One Indian family stood in front of the Commercial House last night, and the father and mother and five children divided a quart, each in turn being handed the long black bottle. After the bottle was emptied they all went into the dining-room seemingly greatly refreshed.⁵⁶¹

Without a doubt, both claims appealed not only to the imaginations of local residents, but to their coffers as well. The claims provided a financial benefit to Streeter and his supporters and to Pokagon Potawatomi tribal members alike, and in that respect both should be considered a successes.

Meaning Making and the Chicago “Frontier”

In the 1890’s others in Chicago were articulating their visions of American expansion and exceptionalism under the rubric of “frontier.” Most notably, Frederick Jackson Turner and William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody presented to Chicagoans and the world their perspectives on the conquest of the North American continent. Their arguments differed from both those of Streeter and the Potawatomi, and while Potawatomi claims to territory remain largely forgotten by the public, the non-Native narratives of taking survive in the collective memory of Chicagoans.

For more than thirty years, showman William F. Cody manufactured a tale of the “winning of the West” that has become a part of the collective memory of most Americans. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s lecture "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," delivered to the American Historical Association in 1893 at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago similarly affected how some Americans thought about themselves. While Turner asserted that the wilds of the United States had

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

been conquered by the axe and plow of settler immigrants, Cody contended that the Nation had been wrested from the savagery of its indigenous inhabitants. The power of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and Turner's Frontier Thesis were not only in the images presented or in the ideas promoted. The most substantial impact was in the unification of the citizenry of the United States under these false hyper-realities. Those meta-narratives of destiny and exceptionalism continue to this day.

Turner and Cody presented two distinct representations of four hundred years of American history at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (WCE) in Chicago. Each presented a myth supporting the ideology of *Manifest Destiny* and justifying Euro-American expansion across the North American continent. Their narratives depended upon differing understandings of the "frontier" to help explain the often difficult interactions between Settlers and indigenous inhabitants. Denied official participation in the Fair, William F. Cody set up shop across the street from its main entrance. Cody's Buffalo Bill's Wild West (WW) was situated at the western end of the Midway Plaisance of the Fair. Initially a "report from the front," after the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre and the final suppression of any significant opportunity for Indian armed resistance, Cody's outdoor extravaganza was reconfigured into an "American History lesson."

Situated in Chicago on fourteen acres, the WW was replete with grandstand seating, included mock battles between Indians and Cavalry, a reenactment of "Custer's Last Stand," relics from the events surrounding the Massacre at Wounded Knee including Sitting Bull's bullet-riddled cabin, a rendition of the battle to the death between Buffalo

Bill and Yellow Hair, Indian attacks on wagon trains and settler cabins.⁵⁶² The quaint liberal narratives in the WW lamenting the demise of Indian peoples obscured the evidence of Indians' struggles and persistence. This production of imperial nostalgia by Cody, however, made Indians safe enough that active attempts at annihilation ceased.⁵⁶³ For the price of admission, audiences were transported, in their imaginations, to bear witness to the heroics of the American conquest of the Indian and the settlement of the West. These reenactments were more than mere entertainment; they became a collective historical reality. Buffalo Bill established himself as a physical representation of the Indian fighter, cowboy, and scout who cleared the West for the rest of America.

The self-appointed hero of this meta-history, he became synonymous with all things right and good about America's manifest exploitation of the West. The culture industry packaged a version of American history to create a lasting image product of "how the West was won." Working class men and women, most of them recent immigrants who were laboring under exploitive situations and living in squalid conditions, could perhaps take comfort that they somehow had a piece of the cultural patrimony, and this proved to them they had earned a place in the meta-narrative of the United States. In Cody's shows, the Indians usually played the villain, attacking stagecoaches and wagon trains in order to be driven off by "heroic" cowboys and soldiers. Cody also had the wives and children of his Indian performers travel with the

⁵⁶² Paul Redden, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 119.

⁵⁶³ Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Vine Deloria Jr., "The Indians," in *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, ed. David H. Katzive, et al. 56-58 (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1981); L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); L.G. Moses, Performative "Traditions in American Indian History," in ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, *A Companion to American Indian History*, 193-208 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

show so that the paying public could see the families of his performers as well. As Philip Deloria has pointed out, many Native performers gladly participated in the WW as an opportunity to escape the poverty and dullness of the reservation.⁵⁶⁴ “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” represented a hegemonic discourse where simulation could secure the consent of the subaltern when the real might not suffice.⁵⁶⁵

Through the pageant, Cody engaged in the commodification of memory and history.⁵⁶⁶ As George Lipitz points out, audiences engage in a dialogue with the past and the meanings and memories it holds for them. Collective memory becomes part of individual and group identity.⁵⁶⁷ The WW helped solidify a collective American identity as rugged individualists, conquerors, and rightful heirs to the North American Continent. The WW also represented a “middle ground,” — a space not only full of competing images and narratives meant to exotify, and titillate — but also a place where neither the performers nor the *consumers* were able to exercise complete dominion over the other.⁵⁶⁸ The WW was a place full of understandings and misunderstandings between performers and audience, but in their interactions, they took those misperceptions and converted

⁵⁶⁴ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004).

⁵⁶⁵ Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, eds. *Media and Cultural Studies. KeyWorks* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), xv, Antonio Gramsci, (i) *History of the Subaltern Classes*; (ii) *The Concept of “Ideology”*; (iii) *Cultural Themes: Ideological Material*, 14-16.

⁵⁶⁶ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation, the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 5-6. Slotkin discusses the intersections of ideology and myth. Ideology is the basic system of concepts, beliefs and values that define a society’s way of interpreting its cosmos and the meaning of its history. Myth is contrasted as the stories that have acquired the power to symbolize a society’s ideology. Myth is an expression of ideology in narrative form.

⁵⁶⁷ George Lipitz. *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

⁵⁶⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), Introduction, x. In the middle ground, "diverse peoples adjust their differences through what amounts to a process of creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings. People try to persuade others who are different from themselves by appealing to what they perceive to be the values and the practices of those others. They often misinterpret and distort both the values and practices of those they deal with, but from these misunderstandings arise new meanings and through them new practices."

them into practices that worked. Performers were allowed to *be* Indian and relieved of the pressures of the era to assimilate into the dominant White culture while non-Native audiences were able to view the contest between “civilization and savagery” from the safety of their seats. In this middle ground, Indian performers represented themselves to audiences as proud bearers of the traditional cultures of their communities while for the audience what was often perceived were Indians acting out a history that confirmed the superiority of the White race.⁵⁶⁹ According to Greg Dening:

Such an ethnographic moment as encounter, the first product of which is interpretation, an understanding of what is new and unexperienced in the light of what is old and experienced – (opens) a space between cultures filled by interpretation, metamorphic understanding and translation.⁵⁷⁰

Cody’s parade through history created a frontier mythology for an audience that sought validation for the colonization of North America. In blurring the lines between fact and fiction and history and melodrama, the spectacle confirmed a “heroic national identity” based upon this frontier crucible.⁵⁷¹ It was an era of claims making; Streeter and the Pokagon Potawatomi, responded by making claim to territory within the boundaries of the United States even as the United States sought to expand beyond it into Hawai’i, Cuba, the Philippines and elsewhere.

Spectacles and the like are contested sites that often manifested oppositional displays by those unwilling to embrace the “visions” conjured by the culture industry of

⁵⁶⁹ As David Roediger points out, this stratification of the social order and placement of others below the newly arrived immigrant classes came at a heavy price for everyone. David A. Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso Books, 1999). However, one could argue that perhaps some of the performers and audience took a different view; that the show was about healing the wounds left over from the “Indian Wars,” making Indians more approachable to White Americans, transferring real hatred to staged hatred, real experiences into fantasy, real gulfs between cultures into bridged experiences, conquest into collaboration, and guilt into atonement.

⁵⁷⁰ Greg Dening, as quoted in Roslyn Poignant *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (Hartford: Yale University Press, 2004), 275.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 242-243.

showmen and fair planners. Cultural commodities like exhibitions privileged the visual over the textual.⁵⁷² Turner's understandings of "frontier," contrasted with Cody's spectacle to best explain the "unique" character of Americans.⁵⁷³ While Turner resonated with other scholars, Cody was the historian for the masses. Streeter was certainly capable of manufacturing his own spectacles and his played out both in the courts of law and public opinion. News reports from 1901 give a flavor of his performative endeavors.

Accompanied by glistening bayonets and heralded by the music of a band, Captain George W. Streeter will march within the next two days into the territory he claims. It will be a peaceable seizure, though the cohorts of the 'Governor of the District of Lake Michigan' will be ready for trouble. Their arms, deed and the government archives will be under escort of a chosen ten of the army.⁵⁷⁴

The Pokagon Potawatomi also knew how to put on a good show and capture the imagination of the public of the era, as reflected in this newspaper report from later that same year.

Cash Or The Tomahawk

Red Men Prepare To Collect A Bill In Chicago, Grim War to Be Carried to the City's Gates by the Pottawatomies Unless Residents Hand Over Treasure for Lake Front Lands – Subtle Influence of Captain Streeter Seen in the Ultimatum of the Michigan Residents...the Pottawatomie Indians...are preparing to send a warship filled with 200 braves into the harbor of Chicago to collect \$45,000 said to be due their tribe for land along the lake shore. The Indians are reputed to be allies of Captain George Wellington Streeter, Governor General of the District of Lake Michigan and defend of the faith in Streeter. The scheme of parading a menacing gunboat along the lake shore, after the American custom of collecting Turkish and Morocco indemnities, is credited to the fertile brain of General Streeter, who was at his intellectual best during his recent confinement in jail."⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷² Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Richard White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," in ed. James Grossman, *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7-66.

⁵⁷³ Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington DC: GPO and American Historical Association, 1894), 199-227.

⁵⁷⁴ "Align Tribe For Invasion," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 8, 1901, 3.

⁵⁷⁵ "Cash or the Tomahawk," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Apr. 28, 1901, 1.

Even newspapers outside of Chicago carried news of the gripping events, as is typified by this headlined article from the Kentucky Bee: “*Michigan Indians: Pottawatomie Tribe Decide at Secret Pow Wow to Invest the Lake Front, Chicago*”⁵⁷⁶ Although the “invasion” never materialized, by 1903 the Pokagon Potawatomi were back in Chicago. From September 26 to October 1 of that year, the Chicago Centennial Committee hosted an Indian Encampment at Lincoln Park to honor the city.⁵⁷⁷ The Pokagon Potawatomi were there, led by Simon Pokagon’s son, Charles. A brochure for the fair summarizes the still strong claim to the lakefront even when introducing the audience to the Native participants in an encampment at Lincoln Park.

There are those among the chiefs present who still hold to the belief that this land is theirs and that those who have disposed them did it by means of that might makes right. Strange as it may appear to the white possessors of the soil...there are those among the temporary sojourners in this village who still have hope that recompense may be made them some day for this land which they yielded up when the ruling race came.⁵⁷⁸

Describing the purpose of the encampment, the brochure continues,

There are gathered here in the village which makes such a striking feature of the celebration of Chicago’s birthday, the representatives of six great tribes of red men who once lived either upon this very spot or its immediate vicinity. Just where these Indians are met to-day there dwelt a century ago, the tribe of Pottawattomies under chiefs Pokagon and Poteneebie [Topinabee]⁵⁷⁹

The description includes the participants’ names and their tribal affiliations, identifying their housing in Lincoln Park as a “traditional” village, and describing the “traditional” activities the visitor can plan to see, such as dancing, drumming, la crosse, canoe racing

⁵⁷⁶ “Michigan Indians,” *The Hickman Courier*, Friday, June 14, 1901, 1

⁵⁷⁷ Edward B. Clark, *Indian Encampment, Chicago Centennial, 1903* (Chicago: Chicago Centennial Committee, 1903). This brochure promotes the activities of the festival events.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid*, unnumbered page 3.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid*, parenthesis added.

and portaging, religious ceremonies, council meeting and bow and arrow shooting.⁵⁸⁰ The pamphlet recites again the Pokagon Potawatomi claim,

The son, (Simon) Pokagon, always insisted that only a part of the territory embraced in the present city was included in the sale and that his tribe is the rightful owner of a large part of the most valuable land in the great city. The Pottawattomies who are present in the Indian village at this centennial celebration believe as did their chief, and it was but little more than a year ago when many of them seriously considered the coming to Chicago to squat upon certain lands, in the hope that such action would call attention to their claim and force its settlement.⁵⁸¹

For the Potawatomi and for Streeter, claiming the Chicago lakefront was also an imaginative experience and cultural endeavor. Louis Owens has written that discourse takes place within what Mikhail Bakhtin defined as “dialogically agitated space,” and what Mary Louise Pratt has called contact zones, “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other.”⁵⁸² That sort of *rencontre* between nations and cultures takes place at what are commonly identified as the borderlands.⁵⁸³

Owens distinguishes between the conceptualizations of territory and frontier, the former is “clearly mapped, fully imagined as a place of containment, invented to control and subdue...”⁵⁸⁴ Frontier, for Owens, on the other hand, is a

transcultural zone of contact...the zone of the trickster, a shimmering, always changing zone of multifaceted contact within which every utterance is challenged and interrogated, all referents put into question...’Frontier’ stands, I would further argue, in neat opposition to the concept of ‘territory’.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid, unnumbered back page of brochure.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid, unnumbered page 10.

⁵⁸² Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁵⁸³ Carlos G. Velez-Ibanez, *Border Visions, Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 4-6.

⁵⁸⁴ Louis Owens, *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 26.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

The Chicago lakefront was all of these things at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. For the wealthy landowners and businesses established on the shore, it was territory, neatly divided squares on a plat map drawn up by surveyors and whose validity was enforced by lawyers and hirelings of the Chicago Title and Trust Company. For Streeter and his supporters, the space was frontier, a place of complication and contest, where a man could wash up on the shore and commence to building a community. As Streeter himself said, “Streeterville won’t never have a Chamber of Commerce until it has the cabaret. This is a frontier town and it’s got to go through its red-blooded youth.”⁵⁸⁶

For Streeter, the U.S. Census Bureau declaration, in 1890, that the American frontier was “closed,” was premature by more than a few decades. For the Potawatomi the Chicago lakefront was a different place. Still organized as an Indian nation within the borders of the United States, its claim for the Chicago shoreline meant the kind of bumping of cultures and nations that happens in the borderland. The Potawatomi claim is perhaps best understood as an act of resistance to the hegemony of the United States and its ideology of land, property and ownership. On the other hand, Streeter embraced that ideology, and turned trickster on Chicago when he invoked the mythology of ownership by discovery, creation and conquest to their detriment.

Chicago, at the beginning of the 20th century, remained a frontier town; a middle ground of mutual misunderstandings. Unlike the middle ground of one hundred and fifty years earlier described by Richard White, however, these misunderstandings did not facilitate interaction; instead, they sowed seeds of mistrust. This “urban frontier” describes the interactions between settlers and indigenous peoples in Chicago, the

⁵⁸⁶ Broomell and Church, 164, quoting Streeter.

physical and mental landscapes in which local and global imaginaries meet and interact; a space filled with transcultural practices, mentalities, relationships and belief systems.⁵⁸⁷ Each side of this urban frontier was inhabited by the “other,” who represented radical challenges to models of acceptance, cooperation, rejection, marginalization, violation, love, hatred, and annihilation, represented as the variety of possible responses to the challenged space. How the “other” was treated, when revealed in their irreducibility, when their uniqueness disrupted the neat space of harmonious or contentious interaction narratives, reflected the *contact zones* that occur when disparate peoples meet.⁵⁸⁸ This explains how Streeter could claim the lakefront as his personal fiefdom, the Potawatomi could argue that the lakefront remained their territory while the majority of Chicago scratched their heads and wondered aloud how what had been underwater only a few decades earlier could even be the subject of such controversy.

In this respect, every first encounter with a human from a distinctly different culture reveals itself to be an encounter with one’s own internal limits. Provoking an acute crisis of one’s identity, a highly tensioned awareness of one’s limitations, the other threatens, but also offers, the chance of a boundary transgression and transcendence. The popular captivity narratives of the past recounted crossings of that space, attempts at becoming the other, if only briefly. Since encounters with one’s limits break the space of normality, they complicate the self. They force us to learn the other, to produce some kind of knowledge of the other and sometimes to learn how to live with the other. This meaning making of encounter reflects the internal changes and adjustments that occur,

⁵⁸⁷ Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

⁵⁸⁸ Contact zone is a term first articulated by Mary Louise Pratt to describe the often-contentious interactions that occur when peoples of different cultures clash, struggle resist and accommodate each other. Mary Louise Pratt. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991):3-40.

and then are manifested, in ongoing responses that in the past were too neatly packaged as temporary *coexistence* or conflict.

Although we normally think of this interaction as occurring at the moment of direct physical contact, the power of a pageant like the WW was that it preserved the opportunity for re-encounter. Reenactments presented as history become contact points and contest zones in ways not unlike previous direct contacts with the “other.” We can engage in the same kind of deep reading of Cody’s outdoor drama as we do a text. Imbedded within it is a narrative of power and exchange, identity, authority, obligation and references to the past and future. We know from the history lesson provided by Cody that Americans connected to the narrative of imperialist impulse and national exceptionalism. As war drags on in Iraq and Afghanistan today, Buffalo Bill’s hold on the American imagination appears as strong as ever.

While Turner is credited with interpreting the closing of the frontier in America, Cody was busily reenacting an opened frontier into the collective memory of the citizens of the United States. Streeter, meanwhile, reenacted his own frontier spectacle replete with moments of “discovery” and mapping interpreted as ownership. The Pokagon Potawatomi, meanwhile, created their own spectacle of resistance – creating a borderland within the territory of the nation. At that boundary, along the Chicago lakefront, the Potawatomi sued for what they claimed they never ceded. What they ultimately never ceded was who they were. Cody, Turner, Streeter, and the Pokagon Potawatomi, all advocated for their perspectives at the lakefront of Chicago.

The frontier for Turner was the boundary between that land already subjugated and the empty wilderness yet open to development. Cody, on the other hand, saw the

frontier as a boundary between the civilized and the uncivilized, the wilderness was not empty; rather it was full of wild creatures, including Indians, who had to be conquered, not through toil, but through conflict. Streeter interjected an intersectional understanding of frontier, as it existed on the Chicago lakefront at the end of the 19th century. Streeter's frontier lakefront was empty wilderness available for development— a la Turner. However, for Streeter, it was also a space that would have to be won through conflict, not with Indians and buffalos, but wrangled from the Chicago Title and Trust Company, the Chicago police and judicial system, and Gold Coast neighbors. It is readily acknowledged that all of these frontier myths have been discredited by more recent scholars.⁵⁸⁹ Yet the Pokagon Potawatomi land claim was a debunking of the frontier myth six decades prior to scholarly efforts to do so. For the Pokagon Potawatomi, frontier did not represent some boundary between civilized and uncivilized. It was not the edge of the safe and the dangerous or the known and the unknown. It was not that liminal space between development and wilderness. To the Pokagon Potawatomi, there never was a frontier. Their ancestral lands had been their place of abode. Supernatural intervention (the Great Flood) had made this area an indigenous place long before the arrival of non-Natives. Tribal use of the lands and waters had confirmed this fact to them. For them, the borderland was not between red versus white, civilized versus uncivilized or urban versus rural but rather between legally ceded versus unceded ancestral lands. While Streeter's

⁵⁸⁹ These “new Western historians” include William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987); Richard White, “*It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*,”: *A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) and James R. Grossman, ed. *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

frontier mythology borrowed from the most strategic aspects of Turner and Cody, the Pokagon Potawatomi rejected the frontier notion in its entirety.

Conclusion

The lingering question in this chapter about memory, meaning, and claims making is: why there is such an abundance of scholarship and popular writing about Turner, Cody, and Streeter while their contemporary Potawatomi are rarely mentioned. Scholars have understood the power of imagery and symbols in support of myth and ideology for quite some time.⁵⁹⁰ Michel Foucault noted the influence of spectacle on memory,

Which utterances are destined to disappear without any trace? Which are destined on the other hand, to enter into human memory through ritual, recitation, pedagogy, amusement, festival and publicity?⁵⁹¹

The “Indian Encampment, Chicago Centennial of 1903” brochure (previously referenced) concluded with prophetic words for the Pokagon Potawatomi.

There probably never again will be given an opportunity to see a gathering of Indians like the one within the compass of this village. Sadly enough, when Chicago comes to celebrate its second centennial there probably will be left no recognizable remnant of these five assembled tribes. Chicago today bids them hail, and hopes that the day long may be deferred before the other and fine word, farewell, must be spoken.⁵⁹²

As previously noted, the intersections of Turner and Cody have been thoroughly explored. Today, there are numerous scholarly and popular articles and books and several websites devoted to Captain Streeter’s claim to the Chicago lakefront.⁵⁹³ In 2001, there

⁵⁹⁰ Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); Robert Berkhofer, *The Whiteman’s Indian* (New York: Knopf, 1978).

⁵⁹¹ Michel Foucault, “Politics and the Study of Discourse,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 59-60.

⁵⁹² Clark, unnumbered page 13.

⁵⁹³ <http://www.waterdogmusic.com/ralphcovert/streeterville.html#> (accessed July 25, 2010) and <http://www.capstreeter.com/> (accessed July 18, 2010). A radio show devoted to Streeter was produced by

was a stage production of the Streeter legend in a local Chicago theatre,⁵⁹⁴ and in the fall of 2010, a bronze statue of Streeter was erected at the corner of McClurg Court and East Grand Avenue, at the residential development named Fairbanks Court. There is a bit of irony that Streeter stands so close to a structure named after his adversary N. Kellogg Fairbank. With his stovepipe hat on his head and dachshund in arm, he remains a source of fascination and romanticism for at least some Chicagoans.⁵⁹⁵



Fig. 6.7: Captain George "Cap" Wellington Streeter⁵⁹⁶

However, the Potawatomi claim to the Chicago lakefront is rarely acknowledged, and comes as a surprise to most people.⁵⁹⁷ I believe that the frontier narratives of Turner, Cody, and Streeter still resonate in the popular imagination of the American public and

Archie H. Jones, "The Squatter," WAAF Radio Program, January 15, 1961, Archie H. Jones Papers, Chicago History Museum.

⁵⁹⁴ "Streeterville – a play by Ralph Covert and Griley Mills," The play had its world premiere at TimeLine Theatre, from Feb. 15 through Mar. 18, 2001, <http://www.waterdogmusic.com/ralphcovert/streeterville.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁵⁹⁵ <http://whereishawkins.com/blog/?p=1588> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁵⁹⁶ <http://www.downesstudio.net/streeter.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁵⁹⁷ For instance, a recent publication by the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents includes an entire page devoted to George Wellington Streeter while only mentioning that the "Potawatomi were removed from Chicago in 1824." Rolf Achilles, *Pride of Place, The Streeterville Story* (Chicago: SOAR, 2005), 4.

they retain a place among the meta-narratives of the American people. The Pokagon Potawatomi claim undermines the more acceptable frontier mythology, and so becomes “an inconvenient truth.” Even today, Chicago prefers its original Indian inhabitants to be relegated to the past. For example the website “Frontier to Heartland” sponsored by the Newberry Library continues the usual narrative about Indians and Chicago.

Conflict and accommodation between Europeans and the people they called “Indians” dominated life in central North America for much of the three centuries following the arrival of Europeans. In the process of settling what they called the frontier, Euro-Americans pushed Indians to the margins...*By then the frontier of settlement between whites and Indians was gone.* It its place was a new political frontier, the borderline between Canada and the United States...⁵⁹⁸ (Emphasis added).

“Prairie Fire, The Illinois Country 1673-1818,” an Illinois Historical Digitalization Project sponsored by the Newberry Library of Chicago, the University of Chicago, Northern Illinois University and the Illinois State Library continues this theme. “In 1818 Illinois became the twenty-first state, and by 1832 authorities had pushed the last Native Americans beyond its borders.”⁵⁹⁹ Similarly, the online Encyclopedia of Chicago has articles outlining “Chicago in the Middle Ground”⁶⁰⁰ “Metropolitan Growth,”⁶⁰¹ “Economic Geography,”⁶⁰² a timeline that contains no mention of Indians in Chicago after the 1795 and 1812 entries,⁶⁰³ there *is* an entry for “Streeterville” and the

⁵⁹⁸“Introduction,”<http://publications.newberry.org/frontiertoheartland/exhibits/show/perspectives/fourcenturies> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁵⁹⁹ <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/prairiefire> (accessed July 30, 2010).

⁶⁰⁰ R. David Edmunds, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/254.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁶⁰¹ “Ann Durkin Keating, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/821.html> (accessed July 25, 2010). “While humans have inhabited this area for thousands of years, most of our local history begins with the Potawatomi presence in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Potawatomi farmed, hunted, and traded in this area, locating along trails and water routes.” The Potawatomi are spoken of in the past tense throughout.

⁶⁰² Susan E. Hirsch, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/409.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁶⁰³ <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/500001.html> and <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/500002.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

story of George Wellington Streeter,⁶⁰⁴ yet the entry for “Potawatomis” begins with contact with Europeans and ends in 1840.⁶⁰⁵ This impulse of Euro-Americans to imagine themselves as the first peoples to build anything of note, and as the survivors and inheritors of the land now called Chicago, is an example of what Jean M. O’Brien has called “Firsting and Lasting.” Indians are pushed into the background of memory and are presumed extinct.⁶⁰⁶ Since losing their claim to the Chicago lakefront, the Pokagon Potawatomi have struggled to maintain a presence in Chicago. The next chapter will examine some of the ways in which they did so. Perhaps future scholars will include the Potawatomi in not only their discussions of frontier and the rough and tumble early years of Chicago, but also throughout the history of the City.

⁶⁰⁴ <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1208.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁶⁰⁵ R. David Edmunds, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1001.html> (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁶⁰⁶ Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting, Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), Introduction.

Chapter 7

Leroy Wesaw and the Chicago Canoe Club

Introduction

This chapter chronicles some of the ways in which the Pokagon Potawatomi maintained their presence in the City of Chicago after World War II. After 1950, Americans became aware of a “new” phenomenon, the contemporary urban Indian. As outlined in previous chapters of this dissertation, Indians, and specifically, the Potawatomi, had always been a part of Chicago. However, with employment opportunities in urban areas and poverty on reservations working as motivators, Indians from all over the United States began moving to Chicago. Federal programs terminating tribal recognition and services, as well as federally sponsored relocation programs, contributed substantially to this migration.⁶⁰⁷ In Chicago, urban Indians quickly began to organize into an intertribal community, as evidenced by the founding of the Chicago American Indian Center (AIC) in 1953, the first such urban Indian center in the nation.⁶⁰⁸ The AIC served as a social service agency and social center for the community. The population of Indians in Chicago increased dramatically during this decade, as did AIC activities.⁶⁰⁹ The AIC sponsored social activities such as pow wows, dances, seasonal festivities, a youth group, a camera club, basketball and softball teams, a boy scout troop,

⁶⁰⁷ Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

⁶⁰⁸ Donald L. Fixico, “The Relocation Program and Urbanization,” in *Indians of the Chicago Area*, ed. Terry Straus (Chicago: NAES College Press, 1989), 143-164.

⁶⁰⁹ James B. LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis, Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 138-147.

and a canoe club.⁶¹⁰ While other organizations also served the growing American Indian community, including St. Augustine's Center, the AIC became the destination for Indians seeking a sense of community in their often challenging new urban environment.⁶¹¹ In this chapter, I explore the ways in which the AIC Chicago Canoe Club, organized by Leroy Wesaw, a Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member, promoted in positive and public ways the continued presence of Indians in Chicago. From its organization in 1964 to its wane in 1972, the Chicago Canoe Club was not only the most popular sport and recreational activity sponsored by the AIC, but also became the public face of Indians thriving in Chicago as both native and contemporary peoples.

The Potawatomi and sports in Chicago have a long history, and as discussed in Chapter 2, sport and recreation have always been a part of Native life. Games, such as lacrosse, and activities, such as canoeing, have had both competitive and recreational value to participants. As the literature reviewed suggests, in the 19th and 20th centuries, sport served as both a bridge and a moat – the opportunity to assert both publically the ability to participate in dominant settler society, and to signal a distinct indigenous identity. This chapter chronicles the ways Pokagon Potawatomi Indians used sports and recreation to assert an Indian identity amidst millions of non-Natives in Chicago.

From Warrior to Worthy Adversary

Lacrosse has been a game played by Indians east of the Mississippi since long before contact with Europeans. The origins of the game are explained in many of the

⁶¹⁰ Donald Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 133.

⁶¹¹ LaGrand, 218-220. David Beck, "Chronological Index of Community History – Chicago," in *Indians of the Chicago Area*, ed. Terry Straus (Chicago: NAES College Press, 1989), 197- 202.

traditional stories of the tribes that play the game.⁶¹² Prior to contact, it served both social and ceremonial purposes and was an intratribal and intertribal competition that allowed families, clans, villages, and communities to assert their physical skills and claim superiority. In the 19th century, the sport enjoyed a revival, as non-Natives “discovered” the sport and in typical fashion of the hegemon, expected American Indians to entertain them with the game.

In Chicago, lacrosse became an opportunity for the Pokagon Potawatomi to maintain their distinct public presence as American Indians within the city. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Simon Pokagon presided as honorary umpire of a lacrosse game held as part of World’s Columbian Exposition (WCE) festivities.⁶¹³ At the time, lacrosse was viewed as a distinctly Indian game. A contemporary news report on the WCE game gives little hint that lacrosse would be embraced by elite non-Natives in the next century, but it does emphasize the way in which the game signaled to the crowd the indigeneity of the players.

Lacrosse, the oldest known game in the history of America, was played within the gates of the greatest modern monument in civilization this afternoon...Paint, yellow paint, red paint, black paint, all kinds of paint, known and unknown, seemed to meet on an equal footing upon the faces of semi-savage Iroquois and Pottawatomie...whose ancestors are mentioned in history as once having owned the present site, and who had hunted and were hunted in turn by their pale face brothers who first found the Chicago River.⁶¹⁴

The article continues in the same paternalistic vein,

⁶¹² Thomas Vennum, Jr., *American Indian Lacrosse, Little Brother of War* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 301-318.

⁶¹³ “Red Men Play A Game of Lacrosse,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1893, 9.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The game was between the Canadian Iroquois and the Pottawatomies. Old Chief Pokagon, whose father had much to do with early Chicago history, was the honorary umpire and occupied a seat in the press box.⁶¹⁵

The report includes a description of the game (the Iroquois won) and the finale,

(After winning)...the Iroquois remained in possession of the field, surrounded by several thousand men, women, and children, who evidently had never seen an Indian before.⁶¹⁶

Although the press emphasized the savage warrior status of the Native players, and while Indian participation served to confirm the fantasies of many non-Natives that Indians were artifacts of the Nation's past, the report also provided a counter-narrative to the notion that the Potawatomi were a vanishing race. Only three years before the lacrosse exhibition, the same newspaper had reported the demise of the band.⁶¹⁷

At Chicago's Lincoln Park only ten years later, Simon Pokagon's son, Charles, who had accompanied his father at the lacrosse exhibition of 1893, would lead an encampment of "Sacs and Foxes from Iowa, Pottawatomies...from Michigan...and Winnebagoes...Chippewas and Menominees (from Wisconsin)."⁶¹⁸ Ottawa people also came to join the encampment.⁶¹⁹ The Indians, including the Pokagon Potawatomi, engaged in various "traditional" activities that included holding a lacrosse game for the entertainment of 500,000 spectators.⁶²⁰ They also participated in canoe portaging, canoe racing, and canoe tilting.⁶²¹ The author of the centennial brochure wrote,

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Nora Marks, "Fading from the Earth, The Pottawatomies of the Michigan Hunting Ground, Dissipation and Their Inability to Live in Civilization Too Strong for the Remnant Of the Once Might Tribe ... " *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 15, 1890, 7.

⁶¹⁸ "Chicago Day To Revere The Past," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 26, 1903, 2.

⁶¹⁹ Edward B. Clark, *Indian Encampment at Lincoln Park, Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago Centennial Committee, 1903), unnumbered last page of the brochure.

⁶²⁰ "Chicago Day To Revere The Past," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 26, 1903, 2.

⁶²¹ Clark, unnumbered last page of the brochure.

Special mention should be made of the la crosse (sic) game which will be played on the baseball ground at Lincoln Park. This game is a favorite with the Indians, and for that matter; with many whites, though it is essentially a red man's game. It is interesting and exciting in the extreme, being full of dash and go from the start... Touching again the matter of sports, it may be said that there have been gathered together in this village the Indians known to be the best canoe men in the whole country... Canoe tilting is a favorite water sport of the Indians. They stand in their canoes and each contestant tries by means of his pole to throw his opponent into the water. It is exciting but good humored play.⁶²²

Once again, the Indians, including the Pokagon Potawatomi, were using the athletic traditions of their ancestors to publicize their presence in the city.

Baseball, which some American Indian nationalists claim is a variation of the lacrosse and stickball games of the Indians, was similar to games played in Europe before 1600. Whatever its origins were, beginning in the last half of the 19th century a craze for the game swept across the United States. Baseball (along with football and basketball) were seen as civilizing influences at Indian Boarding schools and Native students embraced the game as an opportunity to prove their worth, assert their dignity and escape the tedium of their schooling.⁶²³ Graduates soon brought baseball to their home reservations and in communities with often little else happening, baseball became a favorite activity.⁶²⁴

White audiences enjoyed watching contests pitting Native and non-Natives on the playing field. Often, the Indians won. Typical is this news report of 1892,

⁶²² Ibid, unnumbered pages 6-8.

⁶²³ John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

⁶²⁴ "Now that the Indian has caught the base-ball craze, who knows but Mr. Anson's next team will be the American Reds against all the other colors in the field." No Title, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 4, 1891, 4. "Cap" Adrian Anson was one of the first professional baseball superstars who was a first basemen and manager for the Chicago White Stockings/Cubs. Born in 1852 and dying in 1922, he is perhaps most remembered for being among many White ball players of the time who refused to take the field against African-Americans. David L. Fleitz, *Cap Anson: The Grand Old Man of Baseball* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2005).

Indian boys...excel in athletic sports, as in the national pastime of baseball...The Haskell Institute nine is a crack team and in its contests with various white clubs in Kansas the Indian boys are almost always victorious.⁶²⁵

Another article from the time describes the Ponca tribe's baseball team and the tribal members' enthusiasm for the game.

They are all picked athletes and fine specimen of manhood. All are exceptionally fleet-footed and can equal in speed almost any man in the National League. They have the baseball fever worse than any Chicago small boy ever dreamed ...Should they come it will afford an interesting sight to Chicago fans. All the players wear their hair long and talk in their own language when playing ball.⁶²⁶

The Pokagon Potawatomi eagerly embraced baseball. The same Michael Williams discussed in Chapter 5, who led the tribe for five decades, was also a manager of the "The Famous Pottawatomie Indian Base Ball Club" touted improbably as "the only all Indian team in the Country" and headquartered in Dowagiac, Michigan.⁶²⁷

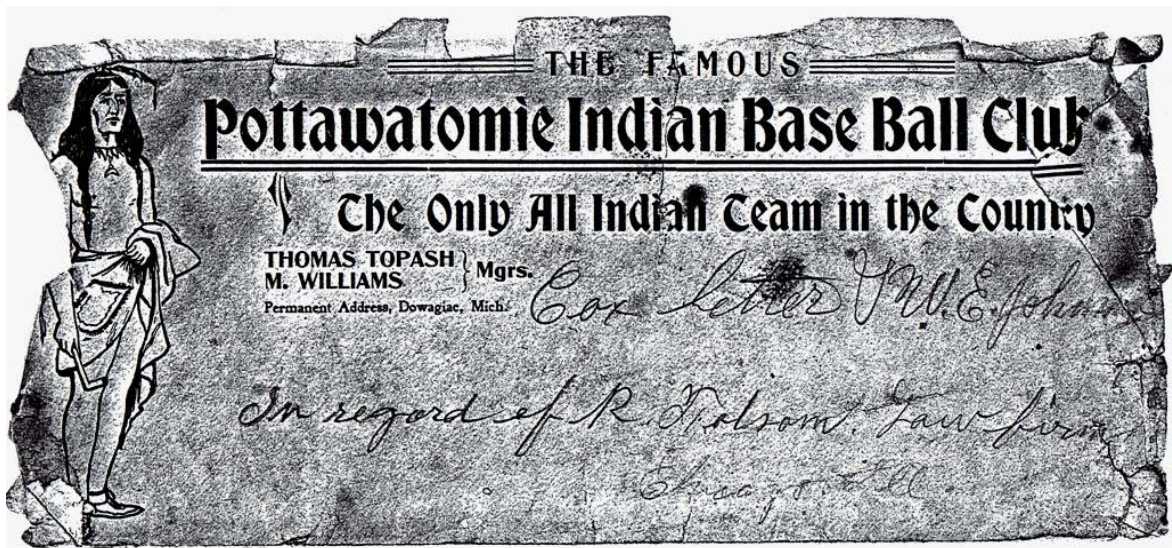


Fig. 7.1: Stationary, circa 1920⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵ "Winning Their Way," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 14, 1892, 25.

⁶²⁶ "Camp on Anson's Trail," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 8, 1896, 4

⁶²⁷ According to Everett Claspy, Williams attended the St. Joseph College for Boys in Rensselaer, Indiana, and worked as a bookkeeper at the Dowagiac Drill Works from where he retired. "In 1913 he was Secretary of the Silver Creek Base Ball team. Everett Claspy, *The Potawatomi Indians of Southwestern Michigan* (Ann Arbor: Braun-Brumfield, 1966), 34.

⁶²⁸ From the Michael Williams papers.

Everett Claspy notes that two Pokagon Potawatomi brothers, Paul and Oliver Hamilton, were stars on the Dowagiac, Michigan High school baseball team in 1921, that Oliver played minor league ball in Lancaster, Pennsylvania before his untimely death in 1923. His brother Paul played the game while attending Haskell Institute and later as a pitcher for a St. Louis Browns farm team.⁶²⁹ Paul also played for factory teams where he worked, including Kawneer Company, National Standard, and Studebaker Automotive. In 1931, he played on the professional Marinette (Wisconsin) baseball team and in 1932 pitched for the Nebraska Indians traveling baseball team.⁶³⁰ While I could find no archival evidence of the Pokagon Potawatomi fielding a team that played specifically in Chicago, it is reasonable to suspect that they participated in games in the Chicago region during the Indian baseball phenomenon that lasted into the World War II era. Baseball would continue the new tradition of Indians, including the Pokagon Potawatomi, who refused to vanish into the shadows of society. Indians were now beating their non-Native neighbors at their own game.

The Power of the Canoe for Potawatomi People

Birch bark canoes (*wigwas jimman* in the Potawatomi language) have figured significantly in the recent histories of the Potawatomi. Some oral histories recount that they were the mode of transport for their great migration west at the behest of prophets five hundred years ago or more from the Atlantic seaboard to the land where food grows on water (wild rice).⁶³¹ Birch bark canoes played a prominent role in the ability of these

⁶²⁹ Everett Claspy, *The Dowagiac – Sister Lakes Resort Area and More About the Potawatomi Indians* (Dowagiac: Published by the Author, 1970), 130.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 134-136.

⁶³¹ James A. Clifton, George L. Cornell and James M. McClurken. *People of the Three Fires: The Ottawa, Potawatomi and Ojibway of Michigan* (Grand Rapids: The Grand Rapids Inter-Tribal Council, 1986), 41; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Press, 1885, (1984 reprint), 146-147.

peoples to dominate their Great Lakes indigenous neighbors in trade and warfare, including the Mesquakie, Miami, and Kickapoo.⁶³² The birch bark canoe also was important in the 17th century when the Iroquois drove the Algonquin tribes of the Great Lakes from Michigan in wars sparked by the colonial fur trade and disease. Those canoes enabled the Three Fires Confederacy to flee to what is now Door County, Wisconsin until they were able to counter-attack and drive the Iroquois back east.⁶³³

Wigwas Jiman has been vital to Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi subsistence too. They used birch bark canoes for fishing, particularly both spear fishing at night by torchlight and by netting.⁶³⁴ Birch bark canoes continue to be essential to the traditional harvesting of wild rice, or *manoomin*, and according to traditional beliefs of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi, a food gifted to them by their Creator.⁶³⁵ As a primary mode of transportation, birch bark canoes carried tribal members to hunting grounds in winter, to the maple sugar harvest in spring, for fishing in summer, and wild ricing in the fall. Birch bark surrounded its occupants and carried them safely from village to village, it facilitated friendships, social interaction and inter-tribal circulation. In a region of numerous streams, lakes, and rivers, the canoe served as their vehicle on indigenous highways. The advantages of birch bark canoes over rafts and dugouts are substantial; canoes draw only a few inches of water and cut through the water quietly, are able to shoot rapids, require little draft, and are easily portaged. In Canada, some Ojibwe called

⁶³² James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683–1983, Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 2.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 1. See also Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁶³⁴ Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979), first publication 1929 by the Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology as Bulletin 86, 149-154.

⁶³⁵ Thomas Vennum, Jr., *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Author unknown, *Protect Our Sacred Manoomin* (Ponsford, MN: White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP), 2005) www.savewildrice.org (accessed 1/12/2010).

their birch bark canoes *wave eaters* because of the sleek way in which they sliced through the water.⁶³⁶ According to the Canadian Museum of Civilization website,

“The bark canoe, with a strong but light inner framework of wood, combines large carrying capacity with minimum weight. Ideal for travel on the network of lakes and often-turbulent rivers that stretch across the northern part of the continent, these portable watercraft were used by First Peoples in all the provinces and territories of Canada. The traditional bark was lightweight and a 4.2 meter canoe weighing some 22.7 kg could be easily carried over the many portages of central and eastern Canadian forests. The canoes were also quite strong, and although susceptible to damage from rocks, could carry large loads in very shallow water. They were easily maneuvered by one person with a single blade paddle and therefore ideal for the fast streams and frequent shoal waters found in the woodland areas.⁶³⁷

The canoes have some design difficulties, particularly with the fragility of the birch-bark. They can puncture if struck by rocks or dragged on lake/riverbed and the pine pitch used to seal and make watertight its seams can become brittle with age.⁶³⁸ Yet, despite these imperfections, the technology of the canoe is masterful. James Clifton describes the importance of the canoe to the Potawatomi,

“As older cultural elements, especially bark canoe use, combined with newer ones, particularly horticulture, the Potawatomi economy expanded and the quality of their life was enriched. Few other Indian tribes in the region possessed this exact combination of elements, which gave the Potawatomi their cultural advantage.⁶³⁹

Helen Tanner describes a similar value to the Ojibwe,

“Canoes were essential items to the Ojibwa. Every family owned several, each weighing from 65 to 125 pounds. Covering the frame and sealed with spruce or pine gum were sheets of birch bark, an indispensable

⁶³⁶ Canadian Museum of Civilization, “Wave Eaters: Native Watercraft in Canada,” Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada. <http://www.civilization.ca/aborig/watercraft/wainteng.html> (accessed April 17, 2005).

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Robert E. Ritzenthaler, “The Building of a Chippewa Indian Birch-Bark Canoe,” *Milwaukee Public Museum Bulletin* vol. 19, no. 2, (1972): 1-33, (first printing 1950. 8-9).

⁶³⁹ Clifton, Cornell and McClurken, 40-41.

material to the Ojibwa economy. It was tough, light, and easy to peel from the tree in the early spring.⁶⁴⁰

The oral histories of the Potawatomi include the teaching that agriculture was acquired from the Mesquakie in exchange for these very valuable canoes.⁶⁴¹ *Wigwas Jiman*, the birch bark canoe, transports people and ideas, and is an iconic symbol of Great Lakes Indian identity. While no longer a routine activity, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi have never ceased building canoes. The Milwaukee Public Museum hired two Ojibwe men in 1947 to construct a traditional birch bark *jiman* while author Robert E. Ritzenhaler documented the steps and the Museum staff filmed the process.⁶⁴² Ritzenhaler's field notes detail gathering the Jack Pine roots for sewing, the harvesting of the *wigwas*, and white cedar for ribs, prows and gunwales, the shaping of the ribs and prow pieces, gathering cedar branches for flooring, the shaping of the bark and building of the inner frame, sewing, and the collection of pine pitch and waterproofing.⁶⁴³ Almost thirty years later, in 1976, Ojibwe canoe builder Earl Nyholm participated in the making of the film *Earl's Canoe: A Traditional Ojibwe Craft*, which highlights the connection between canoes and identity.⁶⁴⁴ Earl (Otchingwanigan) Nyholm is an Ojibwe elder who lives in Crystal Falls, Michigan. He has been working with traditional crafts and technology all of his life and learned early in his life the art of canoe construction from

⁶⁴⁰ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *The Ojibwa*, Indians of North America Series, general ed. Frank W. Porter III (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1992), 24.

⁶⁴¹ Clifton, 1-2.

⁶⁴² Ritzenhaler, 11.

⁶⁴³ Ibid. In the 1971 film *Cesar's Bark Canoe*, sixty seven year old Attikamek Indian Cesar Newwashish builds a birch-bark canoe. According to the liner notes, "With a sure hand he works methodically to fashion a craft unsurpassed in function or beauty of design." *Cesar's Bark Canoe*, VHS, Directed by Bernard Gosselin, (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1971).

⁶⁴⁴ Thomas Vennum, Jr. *Earl's Canoe: A Traditional Ojibwe Craft*. VHS. Directed by Thomas Vennum and Charles Weber with participation by Earl Nyholm (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources, 1999).

tribal elders. According to Nyholm, building canoes “provides a spiritual link to his people – past and present.”⁶⁴⁵ He adds

It’s not a hobby for me, it’s real life. It’s important to hang on to it for some kind of meaning. It’s something like an obligation, but different. If life has no meaning, you get lost. I don’t want my canoe to get lost.” He adds, “In a way, my ancestors talk to me through the canoe...I hear the voices of the old folks’...each time he builds a canoe, he is reminded of his obligation to carry on the traditions of those who came before and to pass them on with reverence and respect. ‘When I build a canoe, the canoe is in charge of the timing. You can’t rush things. You have to do it with respect. You have to thank the trees and the forest for their contributions to the canoe; leave some tobacco as a sacrifice and a token of gratitude.’⁶⁴⁶

Contrary to the expectations of non-Natives at the end of the 19th century, Native peoples did not disappear, nor did their traditions, although sometimes those traditions were preserved in part by ethnologists and others who may have never imagined that their work would be of use to Native peoples.⁶⁴⁷ Much might have been lost during the last five hundred years of disruption and diaspora had this not been done.

Canoeing has become a very popular hobby, and there is a canoe rental shop in almost every state in the United States located close to water. People interested in competitive or recreational canoeing often consider canoe building an artful craft. Some

⁶⁴⁵ C. Ted Behne, “The BirchBark Canoe: Back From the Brink,” *Native Peoples Magazine* (July/August 2001), 53-54.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Edwin Tappan Adney became so enamored with canoes, particularly birch bark ones, that he devoted his life to the study and construction of detailed and finely crafted models of the numerous variations. Destitute at death, 110 models from his collection now resides at the Mariner’s Museum in Newport News, Virginia and a sampling of the collection can be had in John Jennings, *The Art and Obsession of Tappan Adney* (Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2004). See also Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard J. Chapelle, *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1964). Chapelle, Curator of Transportation at the Smithsonian Institution used the notes of Adney from the turn of the last century to produce a text detailing the distinct details, dimensions, decorations, and shapes of the many canoes of North America. See also John McPhee, *The Survival of the Bark Canoe* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975); Timothy J. Kent, *Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade* (Ossineke, MI: Silver Fox Publishing, 1977); and David Gidmark, *Birchbark Canoe, The Story of an Apprenticeship with the Indians* (Burnstown, ONT: General Store Publishing, 1989). There are several organizations and clubs centered on canoe building and canoeing, including the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, www.wcha.org (accessed 1/14/2009) which publishes a monthly newsletter and sponsors gatherings of canoe enthusiasts, and also serves as a resource and clearinghouse for information.

Indians in the United States are coming to understand that it is more than skin tone or ancestry that establishes an indigenous identity separate and distinct from the surrounding non-Native dominant culture. Although spoken regarding a different group of American Indians, the remarks of Creek elder, Phillip Deere, are illustrative of the connections that some American Indian people are making between their cultures and their survival. In a warning about continuing as “a recognizable people,” Deere admonishes,

We may look like Indians, we have the color of an Indian, but what are we thinking? What are we doing to our own children who are losing their language, their own ways... What are they doing? Are they still trying to be Indians or are they just benefit Indians, a three-day Indian, a clinic Indian, or BIA-school Indian, what kind of Indian are we?⁶⁴⁸

The obfuscation of their cultures has not been lost upon the Indian people of the Great Lakes. Subjected to government policies that promoted such things as boarding schools, missionization, language suppression, land loss, allotment, and outlawing of their religions and ceremonies, their cultures were driven underground for several generations until the last several decades of increased plurality. As pressures to assimilate into the *whitestream*⁶⁴⁹ continue, Indians are finding new ways and symbols to assert an indigenous identity. In recent years, Native artisans have been engaging in canoe building. Many of them mix traditional Indian styles of tribal canoes with modern day designs and construction. Canoe building has also been a part of a renaissance of seafaring among the indigenous peoples of the Pacific.⁶⁵⁰ In discussing the active

⁶⁴⁸ Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red, Native American Indian Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 55.

⁶⁴⁹ For more on the *whitestreaming* of American Indians into the mainstream of the hegemony of White America, see Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 9.

⁶⁵⁰ Edgar Blake, “The Polynesian Connection,” *Archaeology*, 00038113 vol. 58, issue 2 (Mar/Apr2005); Ben R. Finney, *Sailing in the Wake of the Ancestors* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2003); Michael E. Harkin, ed., *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, Mar/Apr2005); David Lewis, *We, the Navigators: The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific*, 2nd ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994) and

metaphorical work and communicative agency that canoes engage in Malekula, Vanuatu, in the Melanesian Islands of the Pacific, ethnologist Christopher Tilley makes the following pertinent points, applicable to canoe building in the Great Lakes as well. Tilley outlines the ways in which canoes strengthen individual and community identity. First, the canoe as a utilitarian article of material culture connects the social life of a community to its past and present as a recognized tradition. The construction and use of canoes is an activity itself promotes a sense of unity, commonality, and community. Thirdly, canoes operate as non-verbal communications about relationships within the community, both about themselves and with regard to outsiders. Fourth, canoes connect peoples to their environment. Tilley concludes,

Their metaphorical meanings are multifarious, enabling them to combine and embrace contradictory principles and tendencies in social life. The power of imagery resides in the condensation of reference linked with the sensual and tactile qualities of its material form and reference to the human body. The form of the canoe and the metaphorical attributes associated with it permits the creation of vital referential links...at the heart of social reproduction...⁶⁵¹

Canoe building and canoeing involves the utilization of a natural resource (birch bark) historically claimed as important to the Potawatomi community. Whale hunting for the Makah, the canoe revivals of the Tlingit and the Haida, the spearfishing and wild ricing activities of the Ojibwe, the buffalo herd regeneration efforts of the Lakota and other Plains tribes, and the push for land recovery and sacred site protection are all

Lawrence J. Cunningham, Ward Kranz, and Manny Sikau, "Restoring Traditional Seafaring and Navigation in Guam," *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* vol. 5, no.1/2 (Combined Issue November 2006).

⁶⁵¹ Christopher Tilly, "Metaphor, Materiality and Interpretation; Introduction and The Metaphorical Transformation of Wala Canoes," in *The Material Culture Reader*, ed. V. Buchli (Oxford: Berg Press, 2002), 23-55. Tilly adds, "The enduring symbolic and social significance of the canoe for Wala islanders has always principally resided in its use as a vehicle of power, and in the social relationships that it engenders ... On another and more abstract plane of meaning the canoes are a dynamic symbolic manifestation of the strength and *power* of the past in the present." Ibid, 53.

occurring throughout Indian Country, and all are examples of social movements in American Indian communities that are connecting to the past. They also represent efforts to embrace their place and space as indigenous peoples through connections to natural resources and traditions. Exemplifying this was the commitment in the 1980's, of members of the Pokagon Band, to build a birch bark canoe.⁶⁵² Tribal elder, Mark Alexis, Mike Daugherty, and others built a 17-foot canoe, beginning in 1985. For the first time in seventy years, according to Alexis, the community was constructing a canoe. "They were the Mercedes-Benz of the Indian...There was one outside every wigwam."⁶⁵³ The group used handmade tools and according to a contemporary news report, such tribal projects as canoe building and basketry "...helped to hold the Potawatomi together." That article concludes with the author's opinions about the power of canoes.

...there still remains in a corner of the Midwest, a small group of native Americans holding onto their culture, and perhaps more importantly, sharing it willingly with others.⁶⁵⁴

In 2005, recognizing the importance of canoes to Indigenous peoples around the world and the opportunity for cultural and technological exchange, the University of Michigan sponsored a project, directed by Vicente Diaz, known as "Canoe Crossings." The program sent Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Odawa, and Cherokee Indians to Guam and Hawai'i to meet with navigators and canoe-builders, community activists, and Islander scholars.⁶⁵⁵ The interest in canoes reclaims this item of technology and transportation as a part of indigenous heritage and inheritance and places the Native centrally inside the

⁶⁵² Michael Becker and George W. Wilson, "Tribal leaders seek to maintain traditional Potawatomi skills," *South Bend Tribune*, Sept. 29, 1985, 3.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁵⁵ "Everywhere, Canoes" in "Faculty," *LSA Newsletter*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Spring, 2009), 38-39. I participated in the program while a graduate student at the University and served as a liaison with the Pokagon Potawatomi. Daniel Rapp, another member and elder of the Pokagon Band, also made the journey.

canoe, both literally and symbolically. This is powerful work. Native peoples who have shared so much of themselves with others now build canoes while they build community.⁶⁵⁶

Canoeing in Chicago and the Legacy of Leroy Wesaw, Sr.

The Pokagon had played lacrosse to entertain the hegemon of Chicago and had established their prowess on the fields of baseball. Canoes would be the next vehicle for the Indians to celebrate their heritage. Chicago has a history extending back into the second half of the 19th century of “canoe clubs” for the gentry of the city.⁶⁵⁷ Many Americans associated canoes not only with Indians, but also with nostalgia for the past, leisure, and nature. Typical is “The Torch” by Walt Whitman.

On my Northwest coast in the midst of the night a fishermen's group
stands watching,
Out on the lake that expands before them, others are spearing salmon,
The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the black water,
Bearing a torch ablaze at the prow.⁶⁵⁸

However, in 1964, the formation of the Chicago American Indian Center Canoe Club signaled that American Indians were not only going to participate in games and recreation in ways imposed on them by outsiders, or limit themselves to the sports of the hegemon. In that year, Leroy F. Wesaw, Sr., a Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member, along with a core group of other American Indian Center members, formed a canoe club that

⁶⁵⁶ Early depictions by non-Natives of Chicago include images of Indians (presumably Potawatomi) canoeing along the lakeshore. See for example the engraving titled “Chicago in 1820” (Illinois State Historical Library) and “Chicago in 1820, from an Old View, after a drawing by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft” (Chicago Historical Society) reprinted in R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis, Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 147 and also in William D. Strong, *Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region, With Special Reference to the Illinois and the Potawatomi* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1938), Plate II.

⁶⁵⁷ For example, in 1891, a group of canoe enthusiasts formed the “Chicago Canoe Club” headed by Commodore D.H. Crane. “Canoeists of Chicago,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1891, 9. An industry of canoe makers emerged typified by the success of the Old Town Canoe Company and J.H. Rushton Inc. In the Rushton catalogue of 1910, the “Indian Girl Canoe” was a featured item. Author unknown, *Rushton Indian Girl Canoes* (Canton, NY: J.H. Rushton, Inc., 1910).

⁶⁵⁸ Walt Whitman (1819–1892) *Leaves of Grass*, 1900.

would take an iconic means of indigenous transportation and celebrate their indigenous pride and identity by canoeing across the waterways of Chicago and elsewhere, and across the imaginations of their non-Native neighbors. The story of Leroy Wesaw is also a continuation of the story of the ways the Pokagon Potawatomi, and Indians generally, in Chicago, have asserted their unique Indian identity.

Leroy F. Wesaw, Sr., (b. May 26, 1925, d. January 31, 1994) was born near Hartford, Michigan. In his youth, he attended both local public schools and later the Harbor Springs School for Indians until the eighth grade.⁶⁵⁹ Childhood memories included all sorts of activities with other Pokagon Potawatomi, including picnics, square dances, and baseball.⁶⁶⁰ In 1950, he met his wife Pat (Mohawk and Irish) in Chicago and they married. Unable to find steady work in Michigan, they travelled back and forth between Chicago and Michigan for two years before settling in Chicago.⁶⁶¹ They had three children, Leroy, Jr., Dorothy, and Colin. In the early 1950's, he became involved with the Chicago American Indian community and was an early member of the Chicago American Indian Center (AIC), organized in September, 1953.⁶⁶² Wesaw was very active in many of the activities associated with the Indian Center.⁶⁶³ His son Colin describes his memories of his father's involvement at the American Indian Center.

My dad became a part of the American Indian Center in Chicago, and we would always there, I mean always. He was there so much he got a job

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Leroy Wesaw, Sr., Chicago American Indian Oral History Project, 12/16/1982, Box 2, Folder 5, The Newberry Library and NAES (Native American Education Services) College Library, Chicago, Illinois, 1. His memories of early education were not good. He was kicked out of the local public school. "In the 1930's there was a lot of racism, their culture was strictly alien to me." (15). At the Harbor Springs school, sponsored by the Catholic Church, there was little tolerance Indian traditions or language. He recounts how one of the Sisters caught him speaking Potawatomi and gave him a licking while exclaiming "I'll make you – I'll civilize you, you heathen you." (16).

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid, 15.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid, 18.

⁶⁶² LaGrand, 139.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Leroy Wesaw, Sr., 6.

there and accomplished many things at the Indian Center. He was the Boy Scout Master at the Center, the leader of the American Indian Center Canoe Club, he sat on the board of directors for many years, he would help head up the American Indian Center Pow-Wow, my father's hands were in many if not all functions of the Center. There are too many things my dad did to recall them all but do know he did a lot.⁶⁶⁴

Louis (Bird) Traverzo remembers Wesaw as being like a second father to him, a traditional man, the head of his household, charismatic, funny and a natural leader. Traverzo adds that Wesaw was strong, both mentally and physically, well spoken and respected by the young people at the Indian Center.⁶⁶⁵ In 1964, Traverzo's stepfather, Nathan Bird, was working for a Ralph Frese, the founder and owner of the Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.⁶⁶⁶ At the time, Frese had developed a method for creating canoes and kayaks out of fiberglass. Fiberglass was cheap, plentiful, and relatively easy to work with and as a result Frese could, with the help of his employees (like Bird), create canoes quickly. It seemed serendipitous, that Bird, who was Indian and a friend of Wesaw, would be working at a canoe manufacturing facility. In 1964, Wesaw, Bird, and another AIC member, Dick McPherson, came up with the idea of a canoe club, to be sponsored by the Indian Center. Wanting to use traditional canoes, but unable to secure the materials to build birch bark canoes and without the time and resources to devote to their building, they approached Frese. Frese was already creating simulated birch bark canoes out of fiberglass for various Voyageur reenactments he was participating in, and so, according to Frese, the idea of building a fleet of similar canoes for the Chicago canoe club was easy to agree to. In 1964, the Chicago Canoe Club organized, with Wesaw, Bird,

⁶⁶⁴ Letter from Colin Wesaw to the author, November 10, 2010. Colin Wesaw is now a cultural presenter in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

⁶⁶⁵ Louis Traverzo, interview by the author, Kenosha, WI, February 8, 2011. Traverzo, a member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe, is now head of the TSA at the Milwaukee Public Airport, after having served twenty-seven years in the United States military.

⁶⁶⁶ The canoe shop remains active under Frese at 4019 N. Narragansett Avenue in Chicago and maintains a website at www.chicagolandcanoebase.com (accessed October 26, 2010).

McPherson and Frese as co-founders. Its address was listed as 4605 N. Paulina Ave, in Chicago, although that was just a side door to the American Indian Center.⁶⁶⁷ From the outset, the Club garnered much publicity in the city, particularly for a relatively small organization. Although the press often insisted on calling their crafts “war canoes,” Traverzo reports that the members rarely dressed in ancestral garb or worried that their “birch bark” canoes were made of fiberglass. He says, “We were proud to be Indian, happy to be together, and appreciative of the public interest.”⁶⁶⁸ Wesaw spoke at length about his memories of the Club when interviewed for the Newberry Library Oral History Project in the early 1980’s

...with the Canoe Club, we started that coming across Lake Michigan. Sounds like a good idea, why don’t we! So we did. And look at how – look at the tremendous popularity that canoe club, when it was in its prime...We had a lot of publicity. We went to New York and whipped the best they had on the east coast...It’s – it’s been rewarding. I can’t look back and say that I hasn’t been as I’ve enjoyed every damn minute of it.⁶⁶⁹

Typical of more of the publicity garnered by the Club is this article from the *Chicago Tribune*,

It’s the perfect weather to start the canoe season, or so the American Indian Center Canoe club believes. Four Indian ‘war’ canoes, 26 and 34 feet long, will shove off from Howard street and McCormick boulevard, Evanston today...and the club members will paddle down the north branch and pull out of the water at Michigan avenue some three hours later.⁶⁷⁰

In his essay on the Pokagon Potawatomi, the author Everett Claspy recounts his first meeting with Wesaw,

I reached the new Indian Center in Chicago at 7 p.m., Jan. 17, 1970 on one of the coldest nights of the year. I thought that something might be going on and Mr. Wesaw was there to take charge of a teenage dance...Leroy

⁶⁶⁷ “Local,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1968, 3.

⁶⁶⁸ Louis Traverzo, interview by the author, Kenosha, WI, February 8, 2011.

⁶⁶⁹ Interview of Leroy Wesaw, Sr., 8.

⁶⁷⁰ “Local,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1968, 3.

and his wife, who is from the Mohawk tribe, have three children. He has kept in close contact with Benton Harbor and Hartford. Last summer he took some Chicago boys on a canoe trip down the Paw Paw River. They camped for several nights on land owned by Jewitt P. Pokagon (grandson of Simon Pokagon)...Leroy had recently visited Oklahoma, and is well acquainted with the Indian groups in Detroit which (sic) do not have such a headquarters.⁶⁷¹

While busy working and with his many activities at the American Indian Center, including the youth bowling league, the camera club, and of course, the Canoe Club, Wesaw also never severed his connections to his tribal community in Michigan. He worked on efforts to establish an Indian Center in southwest Michigan, and to secure restoration of federal recognition for the Pokagon Band.⁶⁷²



Fig. 7.2: The Wesaw Family ⁶⁷³

The Chicago Canoe Club membership dramatically increased when the AIC received a charter for an all-Indian Boy Scout troop. Only the second all-Indian troop in the nation at the time, the scoutmaster was Leroy Wesaw.⁶⁷⁴ According to Eli Suzukovich, Boy

⁶⁷¹ Claspy, 128.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 109-110, 128; Interview with Leroy Wesaw, Sr., 10-12.

⁶⁷³ (From L to R) Leroy Wesaw Sr., wife Pat, and their children Colin, Dorothy, and Leroy Jr. Photograph from "Seeing Indian in Chicago" Exhibition Records, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Box 2, Folder 37, Number 30. Copyright the Newberry Library and used with permission.

⁶⁷⁴ "Indian Center to Get Boy Scout Charter," *Chicago Tribune*, Sep. 23, 1964, A6; "Indian Boy Scouts to Study City Lore," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1964, N6.

Scout members eagerly joined in the Club activities.⁶⁷⁵ Club members participated in both competitive and recreational canoeing that received significant publicity during the club's existence. According to Frese, the Club regularly participated in regional Voyageur reenactments. Typical was the event in April 1968 when Club members joined with members of the Prairie Canoe Club and the Illinois Paddling Council to "recreate" the 1675 journey of Father Jacques Marquette down the Illinois River.⁶⁷⁶ Although the non-Native participants were "garbed as French woodsmen," the event, to celebrate the Illinois Sesquicentennial, was not only about Voyageur reenactments; once the canoeists arrived at their destination near Starved Rock State Park, the Chicago Canoe club members also erected an Indian village and held a pow wow in celebration.⁶⁷⁷

Later that same year, Frese, an ardent conservationist, organized a canoe flotilla to journey down the Fox River, to highlight its beauty and need for environmental protection. Chicago Canoe Club members participated and in the news article covering the event, a photograph of Club members readying the canoes included the following caption,

Patience – Frese and his assistants, Kluch and (Leroy) Wesaw, begin work on the sitka spruce rim, or gunwale, of a 34-foot fiberglass canoe...He (Frese) designed the simulated birchbark from prints showing the Great Lakes trading canoes used by Indian tribes.⁶⁷⁸

The article includes a second photo with the caption

⁶⁷⁵ Eli Suzukovich, interview by the author, Chicago, IL, February 16, 2011. Suzukovich, (Chippewa/Cree), is a Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology at the University of Montana and a Research Assistant/Garden Manager at the Chicago American Indian Center.

⁶⁷⁶ William Granger, "65 Canoeists Follow Route of Marquette," *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1968, 18.

⁶⁷⁷ "Big Pow-Wow Near Starved Rock," *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1968, H16.

⁶⁷⁸ David Sibbet, "Massive Canoe Trip, Conservationist Plans Fox River Flotilla," *Chicago Tribune*, June 23, 1968, S2.

Craftsmanship – Ralph Frese expects quality work from his assistants...full blooded Potawatomie, Leroy Wesaw...weaves nylon seats on a canoe...⁶⁷⁹

According to Traverzo, Frese was not always involved in Club activities, which often focused on family outings and canoe racing.⁶⁸⁰ Traverzo remembers the Club as being like the Indian Center – intertribal and social. In fact, he says, non-Indians were welcome to participate in the Club as well. The Canoe Club regularly held family outings, including an annual picnic at Lily Lake located north of Barrington, Illinois, in the far northwest suburbs. According to Traverzo, his strongest memories of the club were the family and social aspects; the camping, playing, cooking, and competing with each other. He believes the Club promoted strong families within the Chicago Indian community by fostering a sense of community and camaraderie. “it reinforced a pride in family and in being Native.”

During the club’s existence, it was the most influential and popular activity sponsored by the AIC, according to Traverzo. Members bought their own canoes or rented them (most often from Frese in either case). Although the canoes were made of fiberglass, the members took great pride in their appearance, according to Traverzo. “We had these really cool jackets with a Chicago Canoe Club logo on the back and when we showed up anywhere with our “birch bark” canoes, everyone wanted to know who we were and what we were about. It made us feel good.” No matter that Frese’s fiberglass “birch bark” canoes were twice as heavy as anyone else’s and twice as slow, according to Traverzo. “We didn’t win many races but we looked good doing it.”⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Louis Traverzo, interview by the author, Kenosha, WI, February 8, 2011.

⁶⁸¹ Louis Traverzo, interview by the author, Kenosha, WI, February 8, 2011



Fig. 7.3: Ladies of the Lake⁶⁸²

Typical of the activities of the Club, was a trip they made down the Chicago River in 1967. The news account relates,

Leroy Wesaw, club president...said the trip was a cold-weather warmup (sic) for a trip the club is planning to Canada.⁶⁸³

Both Traverzo and Frese also remember racing above the Niagara Falls on the St. Lawrence River, later that year. The next year, the Club made news when once again they travelled down the Chicago River. A caption under a photograph of members of the Club in the water and in their canoes at the State Street Bridge, surrounded by skyscrapers, reports

PADDLE PARTY – Members of the Canoe Club of the American Indian center...relax after paddling 10 miles down the Chicago river.⁶⁸⁴

In a *Chicago Daily News* photograph from 1971, showing a canoe manned by Ralph Frese and Nathan Bird, among others, the caption reads,

⁶⁸² The text accompanying the image reads, “Winona Factor, Sandy Bird hold down their canoe during a canoe club outing in the mid 1960’s.” Photograph of Canoe Club members at Lily Lake. Photograph from “Seeing Indian in Chicago” Exhibition Records, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Box 2, Folder 24, Number 3. Copyright the Newberry Library and used with permission.

⁶⁸³ “Canoe Club Journeys Down Chicago River,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 9, 1967, G7.

⁶⁸⁴ No Title, *Chicago Tribune*, August 29, 1968, N1.

Chicagoans who found walking cold Tuesday shivered a little more at the sight of these ‘visitors’ paddling in the Chicago River. The icy trip in a 34-foot birchbark craft was aimed to commemorate the 298th anniversary of the discovery of Illinois by Marquette and Joliet and to call attention to the Chicago Boat Show, which opens at the Amphitheatre Friday.⁶⁸⁵

Both Traverzo and Frese confirm that the canoe club’s connection to Indian heritage was important for Wesaw and the rest of the members. Indian pride and dignity was at the core of the club. During an event at the American Indian Center in 1967, Wesaw declared, “(t)he Indian is a free man...His spirit is hard to crush.”⁶⁸⁶ Cultural aspects surrounded Club activities, although they were not of the reenactment sort. These were contemporary urban Indians, living their lives in ways that made sense to them. While often public in nature, the activities were not performative or obsessed with the past. For instance, in 1971, the American Indian Center published its first ever “Indian Cook Book” based upon the foods prepared on Canoe Club outings. Quoting the author, Violet Harper, (Ojibwe) the *Tribune* reported,

She and her husband and children and 10 to 20 other Indian families of the city join a group within the (AIC) – the Canoe Club – to follow a chosen river in canoes almost every weekend, beginning in May, until winter’s deep freeze. ‘The outings are fun and great for families,’ said Mrs. Harper. ‘They really give the kids a chance to see what is beyond crowded city street.’ The Harpers... came here nine years ago from the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota.⁶⁸⁷

Opportunities to participate in cultural activities sponsored by larger, non-Native institutions also became available.

Dances, handicraft demonstrations, a canoe race, and a pow-wow will highlight the American Indian festival which opens tomorrow at the Field Museum of Natural History...The canoe race, sponsored by the American Indian center canoe club, will begin at 7 a.m. next Sunday at Wilmette. It

⁶⁸⁵ No Title, *Chicago Daily News*, Jan 26, 1971, 3.

⁶⁸⁶ “Indian Drums Beat a Salute to Service Men,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1967, A11.

⁶⁸⁷ Kay Loring, “Tradition’s Role in Indian Cooking,” *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 16, 1971, A3.

will end, after 20 miles of paddling, at Burnham Park harbor. Cruising canoes, kayaks, and war canoes will participate.⁶⁸⁸

The Chicago Canoe Club was also involved in racing and other competitions. The club appears to have begun entering canoe races in 1964. The AIC archives have a photograph taken by Amalia Andujar depicting “Leroy and Pat Wesaw (at) Green Lake, Wisconsin during the big race.”⁶⁸⁹ The Club also participated in the Des Plaines River marathon, the Fox River Valley marathon and the Lone Rock, Wisconsin marathon.⁶⁹⁰ In June of 1966, they won a first place trophy in the canoe-kayak division, at Milwaukee Harbor, completing the five-mile course in fifty-eight minutes and besting fifty-one other teams.⁶⁹¹ Later that summer, the Canoe Club sponsored the “Challenge of the Midwest,” a race that traversed a forty mile course from Zion, Illinois to Chicago’s Roosevelt Road beach.⁶⁹² The press noted the Club members’ preparations for the event with interest.

A war canoe skims thru Lincoln park lagoon each Saturday as 10 Indians prepare for the ‘challenge of the Midwest’ ...LeRoy (sic) Wesaw, Pottawatomie Indian, guides the 36-foot war canoe with a long-bladed paddle at the stern back as Nathan Bird, Winnebago Indian, sets the pace... ‘We’ve got to stay in shape,’ said Wesaw, club president. ‘Bird sometimes sets a pace of 60 strokes or more a minute.’⁶⁹³

According to Wesaw, a large turnout was expected for the event. “Our only fear is Lake Michigan may get rough, as it often does.” He told me that the Winnebago Indians called the lake Da-wa-shek or ‘big, bad water,’⁶⁹⁴ Wesaw added,

⁶⁸⁸ “Indian Festival Set to Begin Tomorrow in Field Museum,” *Chicago Tribune*, A4; “Indian Pow-Wow Offers Canoe Race in Lake,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 22, 1968, N6.

⁶⁸⁹ American Indian Center Archives, photographs by Amalia Andujar, provided to the author by Cyndee Fox-Starr, (Omaha /Odawa), Special Events Coordinator for the AIC.

⁶⁹⁰ “Indians Anticipate Annual Canoe Race on ‘Big, Bad Water,’” *Chicago Tribune*, July 28, 1966, D3.

⁶⁹¹ “Canoe Club Wins Trophy in Milwaukee Race,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 30, 1966, H5.

⁶⁹² Indians Anticipate Annual Canoe Race on ‘Big, Bad Water,’ D3.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

We started the club to promote canoeing, particularly among the Indian population...Many of us have benefitted from valuable advice from our fathers...I'm 41 years old and I'm still learning about canoeing from my father who's in his 80s. He used to pole his way thru Michigan swamps in a canoe.⁶⁹⁵



Fig 7.4: Chicago Canoe Club Members⁶⁹⁶

According to the *Chicago Tribune*,

In addition to practicing in the war canoe, club members paddle their 18-foot 6-inch, two man canoes two or three times a week...Club members range in age from 'two to toothless,' Wesaw continued. They include Sioux, Chippewa Winnebago, Seminole, Pottawatomie, Mokawk, Coushatta, Oneida, Ottawa, Athabaskan, and Menominee Indians and some non Indian members of the center.⁶⁹⁷

The article concludes with a summary of the value of canoeing to the Chicago Indian community.

Canoeing serves not only as good exercise and fun for the participants, Wesaw said. 'Like almost everything an Indian family does, it is aimed at preserving our Indian heritage.'⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ The caption to the photograph reads, "8/18/66 – CHICAGO: Pictured are part of the American Indian Center Canoe Club's entrants in 'Challenge of the Midwest' Canoe Race for Indians scheduled 8/21. Race will be in Lake Michigan, from Great Lakes Training Center to 12th St. beach here, a distance of 35 miles. Ready to launch their 36- ft. war canoe are kneeling, Canoes of all classes will be entered, representing six states and ten tribes. Top (L-R) Leroy Wesaw, Potawatomi; Joe White, Winnebago; Daniel Battise, Alabama, (kneeling) Phil Longie, Sioux and Nathan Bird, Winnebago." UPI Telephoto (From the collection of the author),

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

Ralph Frese remembers another race from New Buffalo to the 95th Street Beach. A canoe manned by Leroy Wesaw and Nathan Bird completed the forty-three mile journey in just ten and a half hours. Frese witnessed the canoe as it came to shore and remembers the waves being so high that Bird's paddle was barely touching the water at the finish.⁶⁹⁹



Fig. 7.5: Canoe Club members at Lily Lake⁷⁰⁰

The next year, a highlight of Canoe Club events included a trip to New York and circling Manhattan Island. The race was sponsored by the American Canoe Association and the Olympic Development Committee.⁷⁰¹ In 1969, club members were back in the Chicago Tribune, out at Lily Lake, participating in oar races and canoe races. That day, Colin Wesaw and Louis (Bird) Traverzo were the winners.⁷⁰²

Elder Joe White (Winnebago) was also interviewed for the Newberry Library Oral History Project. He came to Chicago from Wisconsin in 1948 and was a co-founder

⁶⁹⁹ Ralph Frese, interview by the author, Chicago, IL, October 10, 2010.

⁷⁰⁰ According to the label on the photograph, "Art Elton, Tony Barker, Archie Blackelk, Paul Goodiron in canoe club race." Photograph from "Seeing Indian in Chicago" Exhibition Records, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Box 2, Folder 30, Number 17. Copyright the Newberry Library and used with permission.

⁷⁰¹ Stephen A. O, Golden, "War Canoes Circle Manhattan Island," *The New York Times*, April, 30, 1967, 206.

⁷⁰² No title, *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 14, 1969, N10.

of the American Indian Center.⁷⁰³ He also served as a chairman of the Canoe Club and shared memories of the club.

Leroy Wesaw, and his wife Pat, all the basketball players that were at the center, they were all involved... We had a lot of members then... all their wives were involved... We practiced on Lake Michigan, and every weekend we had an outing where we'd paddle down rivers, like Rock River, Aurora River, rivers in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin, Black River Falls... We won trophies, did canoe races and won trophies. And there was a canoe race around Manhattan Island. Then we raced in Niagara Falls. We were above (the falls and) the next day were down below. We raced right into the Canadian side.⁷⁰⁴

The canoe club lasted until 1972. It's waning can be attributed to several things. According to Eli Suzukovich, that period was a time of conflict at the American Indian Center and many of the programs there went into twilight.⁷⁰⁵ James LaGrand also notes the difficult times at the AIC during this period and the impact on programs and services.⁷⁰⁶ In his interview for the Newberry Oral History project, Wesaw himself seems to connect the decline of the club to his own heart attack in 1972 and the inability for others to continue the club. Nonetheless, during the eight years that the club was active, it provided an opportunity for Indians in Chicago to publicly celebrate their heritage.

Can canoeing in "birch bark" canoes constructed of fiberglass be considered a traditional activity that fosters community? The notion of invented tradition calls into question the "authenticity" of a tradition and the depth of Native histories. The literature regarding the "invention of tradition" began with Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger,⁷⁰⁷ although it certainly has its roots in the earlier work of Ralph Linton's "Nativistic

⁷⁰³ Interview with Joe White., Chicago American Indian Oral History Project, 2.14.1984, Box 2, Folder 16, The Newberry Library and NAES (Native American Education Services) College Library, Chicago, Illinois, 2-3.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid, 7-8.

⁷⁰⁵ Interview with Eli Suzukovich.

⁷⁰⁶ LaGrand, 227.

⁷⁰⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Movements.”⁷⁰⁸ Native and non-Native scholars alike have been concerned with the ideological manipulation of heritage. I believe the use of the term “traditional,” as articulated by Craig S. Womack as “anything useful to Indian people in retaining their values and worldviews, no matter how much it deviates from what people did two hundred years ago,” is the best way to understand the Chicago Canoe Club as a traditional activity that presented a public face for contemporary indigenous peoples in Chicago.⁷⁰⁹

While the canoes themselves were made of fiberglass, hardly the material invoking the Indian identity like birch bark clad boats and homes discussed in previous chapters, Wesaw and the Canoe Club favored the craft designed by Ralph Frese to represent the Algonquin canoe. As previously mentioned the Canoe Club members took great pride in the style of their boats; it was a celebration of Indian technology and Indian heritage. Frese’s fiberglass canoes, complete with simulated pitch, the texture of birch bark, and decorative etchings, were purposefully designed to represent the past. However, the material was most contemporary and practical. Fiberglass enabled the production of

⁷⁰⁸ Ralph Linton ‘s “Nativistic Movements,” *American Anthropologist* 45:230-240 (1943). Other literature on the issue includes F. Allen Hanson, “The Making of the Maori: Cultural Invention and Its Logic,” *American Anthropologist* 91(4) (1989): 890-901; Roger M. Keesing and Robert Tonkinson, ed. “Reinventing Traditional Culture: The Politics of Kastom in Island Melanesia,” *Mankind* 13(4) (1982); James West Turner, “Continuity and Constraint: Reconstructing the Concept of Tradition from a Pacific Perspective,” *Contemporary Pacific* 9(2) (1997):345-381; Robert Borofsky, *Making History: Pukapukan and Anthropological Constructions of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Roger M. Keesing, “Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific,” *Contemporary Pacific* 1(1-2) (1989); 19-42; and several articles by Jocelyn Linnekin, including “Defining Tradition: Variation on the Hawaiian Identity,” *American Ethnologist* 10:241-252,(1983); “Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity,” *American Anthropologist* 93(2) (1990): 446-449, “The Politics of Culture in the Pacific,” *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, ed. Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990),149-173 and “On the Theory and Politics of Cultural Construction in the Pacific,” *Oceania* 62 (1992): 249-263. For more on the “invented identity” debate and the use of “native,” see also Teresia K. Teaiwa, “Militarism, Tourism and the Native: Articulations in Oceania,” Doctoral Dissertation, History of Consciousness, University of California, Santa Cruz, (2001). For a recent summary and discussion of the issue see Vicente Diaz, *Repositioning the Missionary, Rewriting the History of Colonialism, Native Catholicism and Indigeneity in Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010), 21-23.

⁷⁰⁹ Womack, 42.

enough canoes for the Club members. Wesaw and the rest of the Canoe Club membership made good use of the opportunity afforded by Frese's canoes. Like lacrosse players, they put their *Indianness* on display, and like Indian baseball players from an earlier era, they successfully competed with non-Natives in sport. They also used these fiberglass canoes as a glue to promote family and community cohesion. Wesaw, himself, made clear that tradition was important to him. In 1975, he enrolled in Native American Education Services (NAES) College in Chicago and in 1978 was one of the students of the first graduating class. In his senior field project, titled "Changing Values in the Indian Culture," Wesaw asked,

Since the Indian tribes east of the Mississippi have been in contact with the dominant society longer than those in the western states, it would be natural to assume the eastern tribes to be more assimilated than those in the west. Have these tribesmen of the east, both rural and urban changed their traditional family and individual roles for a culture that was alien to these shores 300 years ago? Or have they assumed a facile polish of civilization to make their lives easier in the face of the racism that followed the conquest of their lands?⁷¹⁰

After examining two families and their connections to community and tradition, Wesaw concluded,

...I could only suggest that in order to fight total assimilation of the Potawatomi into the dominant society, parents must realize they are the connecting link between the old and new. If their heritage and culture are to survive, they must maintain the ties on the reservation and use the resources there...The elders, both rural and urban, must teach as only they can the tradition and mythology of the Pottawatomi people.⁷¹¹

What Wesaw may not have been as consciously aware of, or concerned with, is that his own activities, specifically the Canoe Club, were not only teaching young Indians who

⁷¹⁰ Leroy Wesaw, "Changing Values in the Indian Culture," Native American Educational Services, Student Field Projects, Box 1, Folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, 1

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

they were. He was also teaching the rest of the Chicago about what it meant to be Indian, and to be Potawatomi, in the 20th century.

On November 20, 2010, at the AIC Veteran's Pow Wow, held that year at the Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier, members of the Pokagon Potawatomi community came to formally present the Pokagon Potawatomi national flag to the American Indian Center and to honor the memory and legacy of Leroy Wesaw, Sr. According to the tribal newsletter,

The dedication commemorated the ongoing relationship the tribe has with the City of Chicago. The Pokagon flag takes its place among other tribal flags on display at the Center. Pokagon Chairman Matthew Wesaw spoke at the dedication event. Also in attendance were members of the Tribal Council, Traditions Committee and the Veterans Group. The flag was escorted by an honor guard composed of veterans from the Pokagon Band. Chairman Wesaw represented the tribe at the ceremony in honoring tribal member Leroy Wesaw, Sr. for his many years of involvement in Native American Affairs.⁷¹²

After the presentation of the flag and remarks by the Tribal Chairman and AIC Director, Joseph Podlasek, the celebration ended with an honor dance in the pow wow arena in memory of Wesaw.

Leroy Wesaw's "Potawatomi presence" in the city was different from that of his predecessors; Simon Pokagon, Charles Pokagon, and Michael Williams had all been clear with regard to their tribal affiliation and their claims to a place in the city, its history, and its future. Wesaw's activities, on the other hand, reflected the realities of post-World War II experiences for Chicago's urban Indians. Specific tribal affiliation was less important now than Indian unity and community. The Chicago Canoe Club was proudly diverse and intertribal in its membership. While the Club was not specifically Pokagon Potawatomi, it

⁷¹² Pokagon Potawatomi Tribal Newsletter, *Pokégnek Yajdanawa* (Dowagiac, January, 2011), 3. As a resident of Chicago and a tribal member I was present at the event and introduced the guests.

probably would not have happened without Pokagon Potawatomi tribal member Leroy Wesaw. In that sense, Wesaw maintained the Pokagon Potawatomi presence in Chicago.



Fig. 7.6: Presentation of the Pokagon Potawatomi tribal flag to the AIC ⁷¹³

Conclusion

Indians, and specifically, the Potawatomi, had always been a part of Chicago, and as the population of Indians in Chicago increased dramatically after World War II, the Chicago Canoe Club promoted in positive and public ways the continued presence of Indians in the city. From its inception in 1964 to its close in 1972, the Club was not only the most popular sport and recreational activity sponsored by the American Indian Center, but it also served as the public face of the Indian community that was thriving in Chicago. Unlike birch bark-clad books, tipis, and Indian villages of the past, the Canoe Club focused on form and activities, rather than materiality alone, to signal its members' indigeneity. Nonetheless, Wesaw drew upon canoe traditions of the past to further reinforce the pride and camaraderie that continues to maintain the link between the Pokagon Potawatomi people and their ancestral lands in northeastern Illinois.

⁷¹³ (From L to R) Roger Williams, Butch Starrett, Tribal Chair Matthew Wesaw and AIC Director Joseph Podlasek. Photograph provided by the Chicago American Indian Center and released for general publication. It was included in the January 2011 Pokagon Potawatomi tribal newsletter.

Collaboration with non-Natives was also an important feature of the Canoe Club, and it promoted inclusion rather than marginalization. The legacy of the Club is that it made important contributions to strengthening the Chicago Indian community, while fostering their recognition as fellow Chicagoans by their non-Indian neighbors.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The reasons behind the efforts of Pokagon Potawatomi tribal members to maintain a connection with Chicago are as varied as the lives and experiences of the individuals documented in this dissertation. There is a sense that the actions of Leopold, Simon, and Charles Pokagon, of Michael Williams and the Tribe's Business Committee, of Leroy Wesaw, Sr., and many others reflected a demand for respect as fellow citizens. There are also elements of opposition, especially a refusal to be removed from the area or marginalized by new non-Native neighbors. Inclusion in the life of the city was certainly a motivator. An acknowledgement that this was still Indian land, as well as a metropolitan center, also seems to weave its ways through their stories. Chicago has served as a stage to reach large audiences – whether the desire was individual celebrity or the confirmation of individual and community identity. Money was also a motivator, as the city became a center of incredible wealth, some Pokagon Potawatomis saw the opportunity to benefit themselves and fellow tribal members by making claims to a piece of it. A common thread in these stories is that tribal members continued to impress themselves onto the collective memory of Chicagoans with the aid of traditional activities and materials. Living in the present, they laid claim not only to the past, but also to such environmental resources as the rivers, lakes, and forests.

Custodians of the Land and Water

The Pokagon Potawatomi people were here before Chicago became incorporated as a city, and they retained a connection to both the land that city rose upon and to the water at its front door. Preceding chapters clearly make the connections of the Pokagon Potawatomi people to their environment. As caretakers of the environment around them, it may well be that they are, whether consciously or not, unwilling to relinquish this role. Maintaining the health of their environment, both physically and spiritually, continues to be a moral imperative among many Potawatomi and other Indian peoples. Concern for the land beneath Chicago and the water to its east is important to many Potawatomi tribal members. How important that belief has been for the Pokagon Potawatomi seeking to retain a hold to Chicago is beyond the scope of this dissertation to gauge. However, it is public knowledge that Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi women, traditionally the keepers of the water, continue to care for the Great Lakes, and in 2008 Pokagon tribal members participated in a water walk circumventing Lake Michigan to pray for the health of the Lake. While in Chicago, they stopped periodically to offer prayers for the well-being of the Lake.⁷¹⁴ The Potawatomi have a long history of caring for the Lake and its creatures through prayer and ceremony. The traditional belief of all Potawatomi in the underwater panther, which resides in such waters as Lake Michigan, has been well documented. In 1938, William Duncan Strong wrote of the Potawatomi conception of the water panther in his treatise on the Indian tribes of the Chicago region,⁷¹⁵ “The evil power in the water

⁷¹⁴ http://motherearthwaterwalk.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72&Itemid=83 (accessed March 4, 2011).

⁷¹⁵ William Duncan Strong, “The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region, With Special Reference to the Illinois and the Potawatomi,” *Anthropology Leaflet 24*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Field Museum, 1933).

was the great horned water-panther... who was at constant war with the Thunderbirds.”⁷¹⁶

In 1923, ethnologist Alanson Skinner recorded the belief in the water panther during his study of the Prairie Band of Potawatomi in Kansas, although the concept predates European arrival and is general to all Potawatomi prior to contact. According to Skinner, one of these water panthers lived in Lake Michigan, and he describes what he learned in his interviews,

There is an evil power in the water, who possesses the ability to pass through the earth as well as its natural element. This is the great horned Water-panther called Nampe'shiu, or Nampeshi'k. It is at constant war with the Thunderbirds. When one appears to a man he will become a great warrior. Such panthers maliciously drown people, who are afterwards found with mud in their mouths, eyes, and ears.⁷¹⁷

James H. Howard noted in his study of the panther that depictions are evident in carvings, pictographs, effigy mounds in the Midwest, and other representations of the being. Howard interviewed Prairie Band Potawatomi medicine person James Kagmega, in 1959.⁷¹⁸ Kagmega was the keeper of the Underwater Panther ceremonial bundle and told Howard that the rite was an ancient one for the Potawatomi, one essential to the well-being of the tribe. The teachings of the Underwater Panther included the following,

We are taught that there is continual warfare between the Powers Above (Thunderbirds and their bird allies) and the Powers Below (Underwater Panthers and their snake and fish allies). Their conflicts affect the lives of the different Indian tribes here on the earth. When they are quiet and at peace, the Indians are peaceful too. When there is battle in the heavens and at the bottom of the waters, then there is warfare among mankind too.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, 25.

⁷¹⁷ Alanson Skinner, “The Mascoutens or Prairie Potawatomi Indians: Part I, Social Life and Ceremonies,” *Bulletin, Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee*, vol. 6, no. 1, (1923):1-262, 47-48.

⁷¹⁸ The Prairie Band of Potawatomi were relocated from Illinois beginning in the 1830's.

⁷¹⁹ James H. Howard, “When They Worship the Underwater Panther: A Prairie Potawatomi Bundle Ceremony,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* vol. 16, no. 2 (Summer, 1960): 217-224.

So, taking care of the Lake and its beings also takes care of the world. Such ceremonial care of the environment around them reflects the strong connections the Potawatomi continue to have to their ancestral lands, including the places now called Chicago and Lake Michigan.

The Indian Removal That Wasn't

After passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, some in Chicago may have assumed the days of the Potawatomi in Chicago were numbered; and that belief was likely only strengthened with the negotiation of the Treaty of Chicago in 1833. We who live in Chicago now can imagine what the weather was like that first month of fall, 1833. Likely, the days were still warm, though less humid than the previous month. The nights however were cooling off; the leaves on the sumacs were probably turning brilliant red and orange. The changes of the season were apparent in the air. So it was in Chicago. For the residents of the Chicago area that fall, the changes would be especially dramatic. The Treaty of Chicago in 1833 ceded the last of the remaining Indian lands in Illinois to the United States, and it is cited as the last great treaty between the United States and American Indians in the Great Lakes region.⁷²⁰

We can imagine the weather, but perhaps little else about the situation of 1833. We do have access to eyewitness accounts written by non-Native participants, reflecting their perceptions of what was seen and felt by the parties involved. During his travels through North America, Charles Joseph Latrobe, an Englishman, was present at the treaty occurring in Chicago that Fall of 1833. Latrobe recounts in “The Rambler in North America,”

⁷²⁰ James A. Clifton, “Chicago, September 14, 1833, The Last Great Indian Treaty of the Old Northwest,” *Chicago History Magazine* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society Magazine, 1980).

It is a grievous thing that Government is not strong handed enough to put a stop to the shameful and scandalous sale of whiskey to these poor miserable wretches. But here lie casks of it for sale under the very eye of the Commissioners, met together for purposes which demand that sobriety should be maintained, were it only that no one should be able to lay at their door an accusation of unfair dealing, and of having taken advantage of the helpless Indian in a bargain, whereby the people of the United States were to be greatly the gainers. And such was the state of things day by day...However anxious I and others might be to exculpate the United States Government from the charge of cold and selfish policy toward the remnant of the Indian tribes, and from that of resorting to unworthy and diabolical means in attaining possession of their lands, as long as it can be said with truth, that drunkenness was not guarded against, and that means were furnished at the very time of the Treaty, and under the very nose of the Commissioners, how can it be expected but a stigma will attend every transaction of this kind. The sin may lie at the door of the individuals more immediately in contact with them; but the character of the people as a nation, it should be guarded against, beyond a possibility of transgression. Who will believe that any act, however formally executed by the chiefs, is valid, as long as it is known that whiskey was one of the parties to the treaty? ⁷²¹

We have less widely circulated oral histories that have passed down among tribal members of the events, and parallels in history from which to draw conclusions. The mindset of the inhabitants of Chicago that September may have been very similar to many other times in history, when indigenous peoples have been dispossessed of their lands at the hands of European colonizers; places like Australia and the Pacific, Africa, India, and the Middle East. The Treaty of Chicago of 1833 began a long period of adjustment for the Indians affected, as they moved from their life ways of relative independence into a period of persistence and adaptation.

The year 1833 was rife with calls for cession of land and removal of Indians by the ever-increasing American inhabitants of the Chicago region. The Treaty of Chicago and the removal of the Potawatomi would reflect a nexus of private desire and federal

⁷²¹ Charles Joseph Latrobe, "The Rambler in North America" reprinted in *As Others See Chicago*, comp. and ed. Bessie Louise Pierce (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 55.

Indian policy. Interestingly and often forgotten, by the 1830's, some Potawatomi had established themselves in "Chicago society." They were voting in local elections, serving on town councils, and holding positions of public trust. But several separate sets of circumstances contributed to the conclusion that Indians would not be allowed to continue to live in Chicago in and substantial numbers. First, and perhaps foremost, was immigration. With the opening of the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes became a highway of commerce, funneling resources east and moving white "settlers" west. Overland routes over the Appalachians were being opened as well. Chicago, the once quiet area of marsh and onion, then of fur and trade, now was becoming a boomtown for enterprise and American expansion. Many of the Indian residents, for their part, were most unenthusiastic about assimilating into an American society of small agrarians. Although the Potawatomi and other Indians had been attracted to, and felt a kinship with, the earlier French trader/trapper lifestyle, they quickly saw the American life way of small farms as full of drudgery and toil. The influx of a population of settlers, miners, developers, and speculators, and the unwillingness of the Indians to join in the tedium of small farming, contributed to their marginalization in the 1830s.

The second factor hanging over Chicago, and casting a pall over continued Indian residency in Chicago was the prior warfare between neighboring Indigenous peoples and the newest white intruders to their lands. One of the legacies of such mobilizations as the 1827 Ho Chunk Resistance and Black Hawk's War in 1832 was a feeling amongst non-Natives that ALL Indians had to be removed from the area. The assistance of the Potawatomi to the Americans during Black Hawk's War and their earlier refusal to

participate with the Ho Chunk were forgotten or ignored, as white Chicagoans pressured for cession and removal.

A third factor was economic as well as political. Subsequent to the War of 1812 with the British Crown, the financially bankrupt American government had established a new fund-raising device, buying land from Indians at a fraction of its value through treaties, removing the Indians west, and then selling the land to speculators at big profits. This practice gained particular momentum after the election in 1828 of Andrew Jackson, who ran for the presidency on a platform of removing all of the Indians west of the Mississippi. In 1830, a sharply divided Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The Treaty of Chicago was one of the first treaties negotiated and ratified under its terms. The act granted the President authority for negotiating the cession of all Indian lands with the states and territories of the U.S. and for removal of those Indian peoples to a new “Indian Territory” to be secured for them to west of the Mississippi River.

While the requirements of the Indian Removal Act were intended to ameliorate and make more palatable this federal policy of social and ethnic cleansing, it nonetheless is clear that the desire of the U.S. in 1833 was twofold: acquisition of land, and exclusion of the Indigenous inhabitants. The Treaty of Chicago was only partially successful in achieving this goal. A Treaty of Council met on September 14, 1833, and the Indian tradition of smoking the “peace” pipe preceded negotiations.⁷²² At the commencement of negotiations with the Treaty Commissioners, the Potawatomi quickly established that they intended to be no easy mark. Apatakisic (Half Day), a chief from the Fox River in Illinois, told the commissioners that the Potawatomi had no intention of agreeing to any land cession and removal. Apatakisic requested that annuities due the Indians from earlier

⁷²² Anselm J. Gerwing, “The Chicago Treaty of 1833,” *JISHS* 57 (1964):117-142, 125.

treaties be paid so that his fellow tribal members could return to their villages and harvest their corn.

For several days thereafter, speeches were exchanged. Finally, on September 19, the Potawatomi notified the Americans that they had selected two metis spokesmen, Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson as their representatives. More serious negotiations continued for a week and a treaty agreement was signed on September 26, 1833. Pursuant to that agreement, the Potawatomi were to relinquish five million acres, eight thousand square miles of land for the promise of the same amount of land along the Missouri River, in what are now Iowa and Missouri.

The scene in Chicago during the negotiations was carnival-like. James Clifton describes it as “an odd sort of emporium, a strange multi-cultural bazaar, a unique kind of exchange.”⁷²³ The air was thick with a possible windfall for the Americans. Indian land and resources, the prairie, farmland, woods, valleys, streams, marshes, and beaches were being converted to liquid asset. The Potawatomi brought their families to the negotiations, six thousand setting up camp along the Chicago River just north of what was then the village limits. Potawatomi men, women, and children filled the Chicago streets. Surrounding the Potawatomi was an assortment of characters. Charles Latrobe, a British eyewitness to the affair, writes that most of the whites consisted of

Horse dealers, and horse stealers, --rogues of every description, ...half breeds, quarter breeds, and men of no breed at all;--dealers in pigs, poultry and potatoes;--men pursuing Indian claims, some for tracts of land, others...for pigs which the wolves had eaten;--creditors of the tribe or of particular Indians, who know they have no chance of getting their money, if they do not get it from government agents;--sharpers of every degree; pedlars, (sic) grog- sellers; Indian agents and Indian traders of every

⁷²³ Clifton, “Chicago, September 14, 1833, The Last Great Indian Treaty of the Old Northwest,” 88.

description...The little village (Chicago) was in an uproar from morning to night, and from night to morning...⁷²⁴

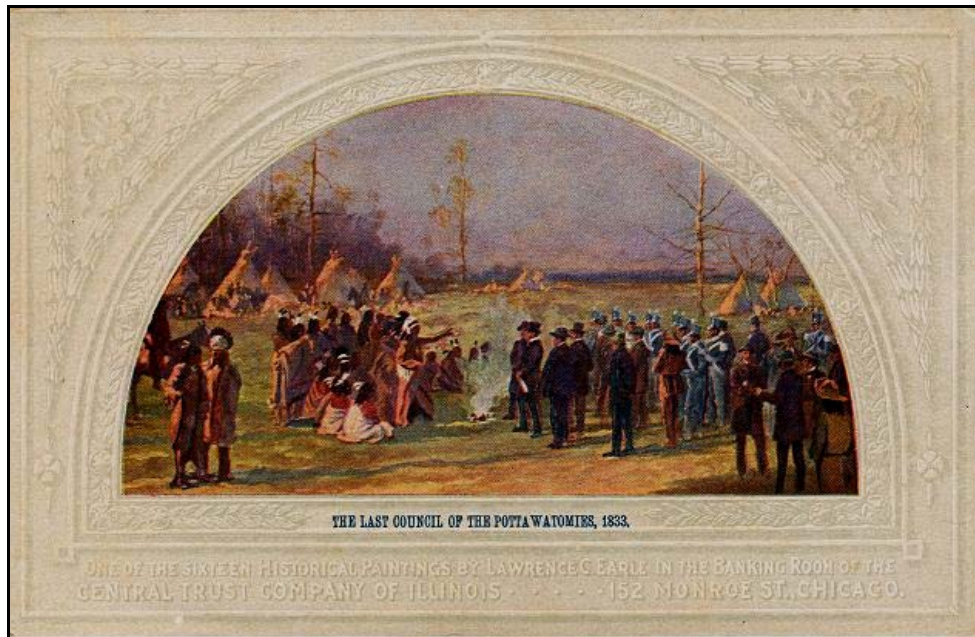


Fig. 8.1: The Last Council of the Pottawatomies, 1833⁷²⁵

For the five days prior to September 26, Clifton points out that the treaty journal falls suspiciously silent as to what was transpiring between the parties, a gap in the negotiation record that would lead later to charges of collusion and conspiracy. By the 26th, when the journal restarts its record, the treaty was already written, ready for signing and certification. Tales of negotiation through bribery, cheating, and the unethical but effective use of alcohol, are part of the oral tradition of the Potawatomi. Clifton writes that during these five days,

⁷²⁴ Latrobe, 55.

⁷²⁵ Painting by Lawrence C. Earle, 1902, and originally hung in the banking room of The Central Trust Company, 152 Monroe St., Chicago, Illinois. The mural is now in the collections of the Chicago History Museum. The text with the mural reads "Treaty of 1833 - In late August 1833, more than six thousand Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa Indians gathered in Chicago to negotiate a treaty ceding their lands west of Lake Michigan to the U.S. government in exchange for a million dollars and western reservations. It commemorates the last and most important Treaty held in Chicago between the Indians and the U.S. Government, resulting in the removal of the Chicago area Indians to the west beyond the Mississippi River." This postcard image is from the collection of the author. http://www.wellswooster.com/earle/chicago_national_bank_postcards.htm (accessed March 2, 2011).

Commissioners Porter and Owens... apparently had introduced their own secret weapons, Subagent Ardent Spirits, Colonel John Silver, and Reverend Utmost Chicanery... Exactly what new steps were taken to encourage the Potawatomi to agree to the details of the (Treaty) are unknown but on the twenty-sixth Porter indicated that in a general council they had done so.⁷²⁶

The Treaty was signed by the three commissioners and by seventy-seven headmen of the Potawatomi. The next day, on September 27, supplemental articles reciting the terms of additional agreements between the United States and the Potawatomi Indians of Michigan and Indiana of the St. Joseph River Valley were attached to the Treaty. Following signatures to this attachment is the exception that allowed some of the Pokagon Potawatomi to escape removal west.

And, as since the signing of the treaty a part of the band residing on the reservations in the Territory of Michigan, have requested, on account of their religious creed, permission to remove to the northern part of the peninsula of Michigan, it is agreed that in case of such removal that just proportion of all annuities payable to them under former treaties and that arising from the sale of the reservation on which they now reside shall be paid to them at L'arbre Croche...⁷²⁷

With this provision, the Catholic Potawatomi of Michigan and Indiana were able to avoid removal. The provision that they move north was never enforced, and they remain in southwest Michigan and northeastern Indiana, to this day, as the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. At the close of the negotiations, the Potawatomi from Wisconsin would return north to their homes where they would continue to reside, in Forest County, Wisconsin, and at Hannahville in Menominee County, Michigan. Others returned to their homes near what is now Alleghan and Athens in Michigan. By far the largest percentage of Potawatomi gathered at Chicago, however, would be forced to leave. They would go

⁷²⁶ James A. Clifton, *The Prairie People: Change and Continuity in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 240-241.

⁷²⁷ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II, "Treaties" (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 402-415, 413.

either to Canada, where descendants still live at Walpole Island, Parry Sound, and elsewhere, or to Iowa and then Kansas, and, for some, on to Oklahoma where descendants now live as the Prairie Band and the Citizen Bands of Potawatomi, respectively.

Today, there are four stars on the flag of the City of Chicago, each representing a watershed moment in the history of the City. The first represents Fort Dearborn, the second the Great Fire of 1871, the third the World's Columbian Exposition and the fourth, the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition.⁷²⁸ We know that the Pokagon Potawatomi played important roles in the first and third and were connected to the second because tribal land claims were a consequence of the conflagration. They were also a part of many other important moments in the history of the city in between. Pokagon Band patriarch Leopold Pokagon was a signatory to the 1833 Treaty of Chicago and negotiated that supplemental provision that allowed the Pokagon Potawatomi to remain in their ancestral lands. Simon Pokagon, Leopold Pokagon's son, left the legacy of seeking inclusion by speaking before a crowd of seventy thousand on "Chicago Day" at the World's Columbian Exposition on October 8, 1893. As the featured speaker, the younger Pokagon advocated for understanding and tolerance. Using the rhetoric of material culture and performance, Simon Pokagon rang a replica of the Liberty Bell, rode a float in the evening festivities of that day, presented a "deed" to the city to Chicago's mayor, and sold copies of his small birch bark book, "The Red Man's Greeting," on the midway at 59th Street, just outside the fairgrounds near a his newly erected birch bark tipi. His novel, *Queen of the Woods*, established him as a literary figure and gave him access to a

⁷²⁸ <http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/symbols/flag.php> (accessed March 8, 2011).

non-Native audience that had to acknowledge the myth of the vanishing Indian in the face of Pokagon's persistent presence.

Simon Pokagon's son Charles continued the Pokagon Potawatomi presence in Chicago by establishing an encampment at the 1903 Indian Village, to celebrate ostensibly the erection of Fort Dearborn a hundred years earlier, but also to publicize the Tribe's claim to the Chicago lakefront. In 1914, in an effort to reclaim that part of Chicago between Michigan Avenue and Lake Michigan, lands that had been created by dumping fill from the 1871 fire into the lake. In 1914, the Business Committee of the Pokagon Band, led by brothers John and Michael Williams, hired attorneys to file suit in federal court and the case proceeded to the U.S. Supreme Court before the Pokagon Potawatomi dream of retaining a part of this ancestral territory was lost.

After World War II, Leroy Wesaw, Sr., again promoted a Pokagon Potawatomi presence in Chicago. Returning to the rhetoric of material culture, he helped organize the American Indian Center Canoe Club from 1964-1972. Using the iconic canoe as a vehicle to instill individual and community pride, the Canoe Club received substantial press coverage of their activities. Reflecting the realities of the post-War urban Indian experience in America, the club was intertribal, their canoes were constructed of fiberglass rather than the birch bark of earlier times, but the message was no less clear to both Native and non-Native Chicagoans; Indians were still a part of Chicago.

More recent events, such as Winter Storytelling at the Newberry Library, the Battle of Fort Dearborn Park dedication, the Foster Avenue Bricolage Project, and the presentation of the Pokagon Potawatomi national flag to the Chicago American Indian Center, confirm that the Pokagon Potawatomi have never forgotten their connections to

Chicago or given up on the desire for inclusion in the social and political life of the city. The Pokagon Potawatomi have been a part of Chicago's history since the latter's infancy, and for the last one hundred and eighty years tribal members have found ways to assert a continued place in the city. The 1833 Treaty of Chicago may have been the last great land cession treaty of the Chicago region, but the Pokagon Potawatomi have never left, and continue to contribute to the history of the city to this day.

So what is at stake in these efforts by Pokagon Potawatomi to retain a place in Chicago? Do they reflect the inability to accept that their ancestral lands have been taken from them? Is it a quaint nostalgia for the past, or is it something deeper and more common to the human experience? For settler-colonists the frontier "closed" in 1890, and in the 20th century, Chicago became the homeland for millions of immigrants from all over the globe as it rose from a frontier outpost, growing into an urban metropolis. Scholars at the Newberry Library in Chicago have documented the transition from frontier to heartland and this intuitive connection to the land that locates it, in metaphorical terms, to the very heart of the nation.⁷²⁹ The Pokagon Potawatomi have a similar relationship to the land they call *Nokmeskignan* or Grandmother Earth, a familial and enduring relationship. Non-Natives, who may not understand the ethic of the Potawatomi to care for and retain a place in their ancestral lands, need only look to their affection for their own heartland to understand why the Potawatomi will never relinquish a place they still consider home.

⁷²⁹ Newberry Library, "Frontier to Heartland," curated by Tobias Higbie, Associate Professor of History, University of California Los Angeles. <http://publications.newberry.org/frontiertoheartland/exhibits/show/perspectives/rethinkingheartland> (accessed March 5, 2010).

Appendices

Appendix

1.1 Transcription of *Pottawattamie Book of Genesis...Legend of the Creation of Man*⁷³⁰

There is an old tradition among our people dimly seen through the mists of time, that Ki-ji Man-i- to (The Great Spirit), after he had created nomash (The Fish) of ni-bi-nong (the waters) and b-nes-sig (the fowls) of no-din (the air), and mo-naw-to-auk

(1)

the beasts of a-ki (the land). His work still failed to satisfy the grand conception of His soul. Hence He called a great Counsel of man-i-to-og (the spirits) that ruled over land and seas, His agents, and revealed unto them how it was the great desire of Nin o-daw (His heart) to create a new being that should stand erect upon his hind legs, and to possess the combined intelligence of all the living creatures He had made.

Most of those spirits whom He had permitted to hold do-minion over the earth, when they met in the great Council, encouraged His Divine plans, but Man-i-to O-gi-maw-og (the spiritual Chief) when

(2)

they considered the great power the proposed being might wield, quietly withdrew themselves from the Council, and held a private pow wow of their own, to frustrate, if possible, the plans of How-waw-tuck (the Almighty). The loyal Mon-i-tog who remained

⁷³⁰ Simon Pokagon (Hartford, MI: C.H. Engle, 1901). . Transcribed from the original by John N. Low.

at the grand Council stood aghast as Ki-ji Man-i-to revealed unto them His Divine plan, explaining the great possibilities that awaited the new creature He had conceived in His heart to create.

The Divine Council was prolonged by debate from the set of sun until morning dawn. Ke-sus (the sun) arose in greater brilliancy than ever before. The Spirits anxiously

(3)

began to inquire of His Maj-esty, “How many suns and moons would pass before He could accomplish His wonderful work?” While yet the inquiry hung on ki o-don-og (their lips), He said unto them “Follow me.” He led them into a great wilderness to Sa-gi-i-gan, a beautiful inland lake. And as He stood upon the shores thereof in the presence of them all, His eyes flashed waw-sawmo-win (lightening)! The lake became boiling water! He then spake in a voice of thunder; “COME FORTH YE LORDS OF AU-KEE (the world)!” The ground opened! And from out of the red clay that lined the

(4)

lake came forth Au-ne-ne gaie Ik-we (man and woman) like kego (flying fish) from out the water! In presence of the new born pair all was still as death! A dark cloud hung over the lake! It began to boil again! The awful silence was then broken! The earth shook! And Ki-ji Man-i- to said ; “Come forth ye servants of An-nish-naw-be (man)!” Forth leaped at once from out the lake Ni-ji wa-be gon o-nim-og (a pair of snow-white dogs) and laid down where stood the new made pair kissing their feet and hands.

The bride and groom then each other fondly kissed as hand in hand they stood , in naked innocence, in their full

(5)

bloom of youth, perfect in make and mould, of body and of limb. Ki-gi-nos maw-kaw mis-taw-kaw (their long black hair) almost reached the ground, which, gently waving in nip-nong oden (the morning breeze) in contrast with their rich color, grace, and forms erect, outrivalled in beauty all other creatures He had made. They looked all about them in wonder and surprise. Surveyed all living creatures that moved in sight. Gazed upon the towering trees. The grass. The flowers. The lake. The sunshine and the shade. And again each other fondly kissed as their eyes looked love to eyes, with no other language their feelings to express.

(6)

At length I-kwe (the maiden fair) slyly let go Os-ki-nawe o-ning-i-maw (the young man's hand) and stole away into the dark shades and hid, where she might watch to test his love, and learn thereby if his feelings were akin to hers. Long he sought in vain to find his mate, until at length the snow-white dogs, following on her track, joyfully howled out; "We have found her."

Now when mau-tchi Man-i-tog (the spiritual Chiefs) first learned that Ki-ji Man-i-to had finished His Crowning works, as He had proposed to do, sought diligently for the new made pair until they found them. And as they surveyed the beauty of their forms erect

(7)

and the surpassing loveliness of body and limb, their wonder and admiration was unbounded. But when they saw the soul of the Divine shining in their faces, like the noon-day sun, their hearts were stung through and through by maw-tchi a-mog (the cruel wasps) of envy and jealousy. Hence they resolved, in nin o-daw (their hearts), that in-

stead of trying to live in peace with them, as they had done with the first creation, they would do all they could to make them discontented, un-happy and miserable.

As time rolled on, the first o-nig-go-maw (parents) and generations after them, began to realize there were man-tchi

(8)

dash meno Mandito (bad spirits and good spirits) that exercised dominion over mountains, lakes, streams and plains, and that they were in a measure controlled by them. They also began to learn that au-nish-i-naw-be (man) possessed the nature and the intelligence of all the animal creation; and that he was endowed with a spiritual nature which was given him by mi-si ge-go ga-gi-ji-tod (the Creator of all things) in waw-kwing dash Au-kee (in heaven and on earth). Hence when they were unfortunate in securing game, or unsuccessful in battle, it was all attributed to the bad spirits that held Do-

(9)

minion over the country wherein they dwelt.

And when game was plenty, and they were successful in battle, this they attributed to the good spirits that controlled the land in which they lived. Sometimes in order to appease bad spirits, they made offerings of fruits and grains. But they sacrificed animals only to Ki-ji Man-i-to waw-quin (the God of Heaven) who alone they recognized as the great Creator and Ruler of all things in heaven and on earth.

Our fathers and mothers in their primeval state, did not name their children as do the civilized races, simply that they might be known and designated by them. But when

(10)

their children were born, whatever animal or bird they imagined they must resemble they were called by that name; and as strange as it may appear to the white race, in after generations those bearing the name of some animal believed, at least they claimed, to have descended from such animal whose name they bore. It might be, maw-qua (the bear), or waw-goosh (the fox) or mi-gi-si (the eagle). The same rule followed in each individual case. And so it was in succeeding generations, each tribe or clan adopted as their “to-tum” the animal or thing whose name the patriarch of the tribe was called when a child.

(11)

Sometimes when at war, the animal was taken with them alive, but generally it was painted on a tanned hide and used as white men use their flags.

It was an emblem of royalty as well as a symbol of loyalty, and when engaged in battle a warrior would rather die than surrender his totum.

It matters not how foolish our legends may appear to those races who call themselves civilized, still they were as sacred to us as holy writ to them.

1.2 Pokagon Birch Bark Books for Sale in New York, circa 1922

*in
st. ind. gal.*

SALE NUMBER 1636
ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION FROM SATURDAY, FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIFTH

A COLLECTION
OF
IMPORTANT CONSIGNMENTS
FROM OVER-SEA
COMPRISING
RARE FRENCH AND ENGLISH CLASSICS; UNUSUAL
TRACTS ON IRELAND; BOOKS ON MARY STUART
CROMWELL AND THE COMMONWEALTH PERIOD
HANDSOME BINDINGS

TOGETHER WITH
THE REMAINDER OF THE LIBRARY
OF THE LATE
DANIEL F. APPLETON
OF NEW YORK CITY
SOLD BY ORDER OF HIS EXECUTOR
MR. J. W. APPLETON

TO BE SOLD
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS
MARCH SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH
AT TWO-THIRTY

THE ANDERSON GALLERIES
[MITCHELL KENNERLEY, PRESIDENT]
PARK AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK
1922

731

⁷³¹ *Sale catalogues, Issues 1631-1654* (New York: American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, 1922), 104. http://books.google.com/books?id=T1vQAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA2-PA104&dq=simon+pokagon+pottawattomie+genesis&hl=en&ei=411QTfKVB8H38Aa4-_n-Dg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed February 7, 2011).

THE ORIGINAL EDITIONS OF POKAGON'S BOOKS ON BIRCH BARK

551. POKAGON (SIMON). Algonquin Legends of Paw Paw Lake. A miniature volume, $3\frac{1}{4}$ x $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 10 pp. and leaf of advertisement, stitched, printed and pictorial covers.

N. p., n. d. [Hartford, Mich.]

The leaves and covers of the book are made from the bark of the white birch tree.

Pokagon was the Pottawattamie Chief whose father sold the site of Chicago to the White Men.

552. — Algonquin Legends of South Haven. A miniature volume, about $3\frac{1}{4}$ by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 12 pp., stitched, printed and pictorial covers.

N. p., n. d. [Hartford, Mich.]

The leaves and covers are made from the bark of the white birch tree. The legends are those of the Au-Nish-Naw-Be-Og, who were driven out of Michigan by the Ottawas about four centuries ago.

553. — Pottawattamie Book of Genesis. Legends of the Creation of Man. A miniature book, $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, 12 pp., stitched, printed wrappers (first leaf misplaced at end of volume).

N. p., n. d. [Hartford, Mich.]

The leaves and covers are made from the bark of the white birch. The Pottawattamie Legend of the creation of humans, and of their early experiences.

554. — The Red Man's Rebuke. Oblong 18mo, $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 5 inches, 16 pp., stitched, printed and pictorial covers.

N. p., n. d. [Hartford, Mich.]

The leaves and covers are made from the bark of the white birch. Pokagon describes the discovery of America as "our funeral." In speaking of the white birch he calls it "this wonderful tree from which were made hats, caps, and dishes for domestic use, while our maidens tied with it the khot that sealed their marriage vow; wigwams were made of it, as well as large canoes; it was also used for light and fuel at our war councils and spirit dances."

555. — O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-ki: (meaning Queen of the Woods), Also, Brief Sketch of the Algaic Language. Third edition. *Portraits*. 12mo, 255 pp., cloth. Hartford, Mich., 1901

Pokagon was among the most remarkable educated Indians of modern times. This book is largely autobiographical.

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3.3 Broadside Advertising the Publication of *Queen of the Woods*



O-GI-MAW-KWE MIT-I-GWA-KI.
(QUEEN OF THE WOODS.)

The latest work of Chief Pokagon entitled, "Queen Of The Woods," is just ready to be placed on sale. Good judges who have examined it believe it will be a standard work of its kind. It embraces a brief sketch of the Aljic language, which can not fail to interest the scholar. It also contains an interesting sketch of his father's life, as well as his own. Also a review of his visit at the opening of the Columbian World's Fair; his disappointment in finding no place there provided for his race, the only true Americans; his return after going to his home in Michigan, by request of Mayor Harrison and lady friends, as a guest of Chicago, to be the central figure in the program on "Chicago Day" as the only living son of the Chief who sold Chicago site, including the Fair grounds, to the United States sixty years before. His return again from home to take part in the closing exercises of the Fair, by request of the Mayor, whose guest he was to be, and to assist him in the closing exercises of the Fair, and his great sorrow to find on his arrival that the Mayor had been murdered!

A graphic account is given of his attending the White man's school; his strange experience with "A-kwe" (a maid) and her sacred deer of white; mi-chi-ankik (the great kettle) of the spirits, made out of pure "mis-kwa-bik" (copper); the two wonderful pictures found, one of "Ki-Ji Manito" (God) before he made the World, and the other after He had finished it.

His romantic courtship, marriage and wedded life in the wilds of Michigan, all told in that native, eloquent style peculiar to the Indian race, which never fails to fascinate and hold the reader's attention from start to finish.

Chief Simon Pokagon was born in 1830, at the old Pokagon village in southern Michigan. He is a full blooded Pottawattamie Indian and the only child now living of Chief Leopold Pokagon, who died in 1840 after having been Chief of the Pokagon Band for forty-two years, and during all that time a leading Chief of the various Pottawattamie Bands of the Northwest. Simon Pokagon, the present Chief of the Pokagon Band, has visited Washington several times during the administrations of Abraham Lincoln and General Grant, in the interest of his Band to procure payment from the government of several hundred thousand dollars due his people from the sale of over a million acres of land including the present site of Chicago, which his father sold to the United States in 1837. The Band has not yet received all the original claim and not one cent of interest has ever been paid them.

The Chief was guest of Chicago during Chicago week of the World's Columbian Fair, and as announced in the dailies at the time, was the central figure on the great Chicago Day, of that week, owing to the fact that he was the son of the very chief who had once owned the city site, and transferred it to the United States. He rang, in the morning of that day, the new Liberty Bell, after which he addressed the assembled thousands in behalf of his people. At the close of his address a grand rush was made by the eager crowd for the old man, with whom he shook hands until his arms gave out. He has during the last five years addressed many pioneer meetings in Indiana and Michigan, always attracting large crowds. He has written many articles of real merit during this time, which have been published in such leading magazines as the "Arena," "Forum," "Harper Brothers," "Chautauquan," "American Review of Reviews," and many others. His "Redman's Greeting," which was published during the spring of the Columbian Fair in a booklet made of manifold birch bark, was termed by Prof. Swing the "Redman's Book of Lamentations." He has been termed by the press, "Grand Old Man," "Barb" and "Eloquifellow of his Race."

In a book just published by Daniel McDonald of Plymouth, Ind., entitled "The Removal of the Pottawattamies from Northern Indiana," appears the following: "Simon Pokagon, a noted Pottawattamie Indian living near Hartford, Mich., has the distinction of being the best educated and most distinguished full blooded Indian probably in America." The old Chief never appears to be in any wise "puffed up" over success or cast down by defeat, nor does he ever refer to either unless interrogated, and then like an honest witness in court, he simply answers the question asked him.

C. H. ENGLE, Publisher.
Hartford, Mich.

Price, \$1.00.

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⁷³² Circa 1899. Original promotional broadside for 'O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-Ki' (*Queen of the Woods*). The broadside includes a three-paragraph statement by the publisher about the book, beginning: "The latest work of Chief Pokagon entitled, 'Queen of the Woods,' is just ready to be placed on sale." Following is an additional three paragraphs written by the publisher, including a brief biography of the author, and printing information about the Chief's attendance of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. The circular was included in a letter originating from Hartford, Michigan, Feb. 16, 1899, 18-lines, in neat pencil holograph. The letter, to "A. O. Robinson", states (in part): "My father chief Pokagon, author of 'The Redman's Greetings,' suddenly died last month just as his book 'Queen of the Woods' was in type . . . Sincerely yours [signed] C. L. Pokagon". From the collection of the author. Another copy is available at the Chicago




3.4 Quit Claim Deed to the Chicago Lakefront Signed by Simon Pokagon

WARRANTY DEED - STATUTORY FORM - Form 40 - Chas. O. Chapin, Stationery Specialist

This Indenture Witnesseth, That the Grantor, *Simon Pokagon* for himself and as Chief of Pottawatomee tribe of Indians, of the Township of *Lee* in the County of *Allegan* and State of *Michigan* for and in consideration of the sum of *One Dollar* and other valuable Considerations in hand paid, CONVEYS and Quit Claims forever to *William H Cox* of the *City of Chicago*, County of *Cook* and State of *Illinois* the following described Real Estate to-wit: beginning at the north east corner of the north part of fractional section two, Town thirty nine, N. Range fourteen east of the 3^d P.M. where the U.S. Govt. surveyor's meander line of 1821 was fixed at the point where the north bank of the Chicago river meets the said U.S. Govt. meander line on the west shore of Lake Michigan, thence from the point of beginning on the said meander line on said Lake Michigan 16° east 14.05 Chains thence north 4° east, 19 Chains, thence north 1° west 43.01 Chains to the north east corner of said frac. Sec. 10, thence north along the east line of frac. Sec. 3, T. 37. N. R. 14, E. the 3^d P.M. on said meander line 91° west, 17.11 Chains, thence north 20° west, 22.50 Chains, thence north 10° west 56.91 Chains thence N. 10° west, 40 Chains, thence east to the waters of Lake Michigan, thence north along the water's edge to the north east corner of the mouth of the Chicago river harbor, thence west along the north side of said Chicago river to the place of beginning, meaning to convey by Quit Claims all of that parcel ~~measured or strip of~~ ^{measured or strip of} ~~land lying~~ ^{land lying} ~~between~~ ^{between} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line of~~ ^{line of} ~~frac. sec. 3~~ ^{frac. sec. 3} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~north~~ ^{north} ~~half~~ ^{half} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~frac. sec. 10~~ ^{frac. sec. 10} ~~east~~ ^{east} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~adjoining~~ ^{adjoining} ~~Township 37~~ ^{Township 37} ~~N. Range 14~~ ^{N. Range 14} ~~E. of the 3^d P.M.~~ ^{E. of the 3^d P.M.} ~~Rock County State of Illinois.~~ ^{Rock County State of Illinois.}

DATED, this *Fifth* day of *April* A. D. 1837

Attest: *A. S. Hubert*
W. E. Foster

Simon Pokagon 
Simon Pokagon 
Simon Pokagon 

History Museum, Pokagon, Simon Folder, Letter to E.G. Mason, dated March 15, 1899, written by Pokagon's son Charles, the letter to Mason included a copy of the same circular.

3.5 Letter Written by Simon Pokagon

Barford, Mich., Sept 12 1895
Mr B. O. Flowers
my Dear Sir: yours of the 7th
at hand, As I read what you said
of your wife illness, My heart
responded "How very sad it is that
one so young, so fair and wise should
suffer so. I am perhaps it has all been
brought about in labouring for others"
I am fully satisfied to accept her
intentions for all she intended to say of
me - I am getting to be an old man
passing over the threshold of my home here
into the great Wiganun beyond where
there are many rooms I trust & pray
that your wife may fully recover & that she
may be spared many years to benefit her race
If you think it will not disturb her say to her she has my
best wishes & the prayers of my heart
Yours Respectfully Simon Pokagon

FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER WRITTEN BY THE CHIEF OF THE POTTAWATOMIE INDIANS.

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⁷³³ Flowers, "An Interesting Representative of His Race,"

4.1 Summary of Monuments and Place-Names Related to the Potawatomi

Monuments, memorials, and place names across the United States purport to honor the Potawatomi, including the naming of several Pokagon Streets in Michigan and Indiana; Pottawatomie County and a creek by the same name in Kansas, immortalized by John Brown's raid on slaveholders during the prior to the U.S. Civil War; Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma; Pottawatomie Roads in Kansas and Oklahoma; Potawatomi Park and Zoo in Mishawaka Indiana; Potawatomi State Park in Door County, Wisconsin; and Potawatomi Tower in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. There is also a Potawatomi Street, Minnesota, Pokagon Township in Michigan; and the Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park near Angola, Indiana; as well, named after both Leopold and Simon Pokagon. According to Everett Claspy, the naming was not lost upon guests to the Inn; "...in its early days, many Indian festivals [were held] along the lakefront, and various people imitated Simon paddling a canoe around the lake."⁷³⁴

There are "Pottawatomie" Schools in both Illinois and Kansas. There are streets and places named after specific Potawatomi leaders such as Topinabee Road in Niles, Michigan, the village of Topinabee in Michigan, Topash Road, and Weesaw Township in Michigan, White Pigeon, Michigan, Wabansia Avenue in Chicago, and the Wabansia School of Nursing in Illinois, to name just a few. References to the removed Potawatomi are common in the Chicago area. Like the environment, the Indigenous of the area were also removed after passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830 and the influx of non-Native settlers after opening of the Erie Canal. There is the plaque in Evanston, Illinois that honors the Potawatomi woman Archange, wife of Metis trader Antoine Ouilmette

⁷³⁴ Everett Claspy, *The Dowagiac-Sister Lakes Resort Area and More About Its Potawatomi Indians* (Dowagiac, MI: self-published, 1970), 114.

(Wilmette). Shabonna Park, Lake, and Springs; the village of Shabbona, Shabbona Lake State Recreation Area; and Shabbona Creek and Shabbona Middle School, all in Illinois and named after a Potawatomi Chief; the neighborhood of Sauganash in Chicago; and Billy Caldwell Golf Course and Caldwell and Alexander Robinson Woods of the Chicago Park District and Wabansia and Caldwell Avenues in Chicago. Chicago city parks and Cook County, Illinois, parks make frequent references to Indians – in such a way, as to remind the current non-Native users that this land was taken from others for their benefit. These include, in Chicago: Black Hawk, Indian Boundary, Miami Pottawatomie, Sauganash, Shabbona, Snapping Turtle, Washtenaw, Winnemac, Calumet, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Chippewa, Indian Hill, Indian Ridge, Indian Road, Indian Trail, Pawnee, Potawatomie, Pottawattomie, and Winnebago, Non-Native people may give scant attention to the ubiquitous reminders of the names of Indians and tribes on their terrain, but to Native people it can be a constant reminder of what was taken, a part of our lived experience, and a desire that these “memorials of conquest and trophy and taking” be contested through a counter-narrative.

In 1897, a “Shabbona Memorial Association was formed, according to a written appeal for donations:

At the 29th annual reunion of the Old Settlers of LaSalle County, Illinois held at Ottawa (Illinois) on the 19th of August, 1897, where there were several thousand people present...a motion (was made) for the appointment of a committee of Old Settlers to devise ways and means for the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of Shabbona, to be placed where he was buried...to the memory of this noble old chief; who was as modest as he was brave and as true to the dictates of humanity as the sun. But we come to bury Shabbona, not to praise him, and for that purpose, based upon the foregoing facts do we appeal to all fair-minded and patriotic citizens to aid and assist us in this long-delayed but

imperative duty, and we specially appeal to the early settlers and their descendants and the public press.⁷³⁵

There are in Chicago a number of architectural reminders of the area's first residents. The Marquette Building, located at 140 South Dearborn in the heart of Chicago's financial district has eleven bronze portraits of Indian leaders and early non-Natives in the marbled first floor lobby. Included are three Potawatomi Chiefs – Shabonna, War Eagle, and Waubansie. In addition, on a wall in the lobby, is a ninety-foot long glass mosaic depicting Father Marquette living among the Potawatomi.

Lincoln Park has a statue well-known to city residents, “The Alarm”, unveiled on May 17, 1884. The first monument erected in a Chicago District park, the bronze sculpture is of an Indian couple – a man stands next to a seated woman with a baby cradle, his bow, quiver of arrows and dog are at his feet. Four bas-relief panels depict scenes of Odawa (Ottawa) life, entitled “The Hunt”, “Forestry,” “The Corn Dance” and “The Peace Pipe.” Businessman Martin Ryerson (1818-1887) commissioned the work as a memorial to “The Ottawa Nation of Indians, my early friends.” Ryerson had worked with the Ottawa as a young trader and sought a self-serving memorial to these early encounters.⁷³⁶

Also located in Lincoln Park is the Totem Pole, also known as Kwa-Ma-Rolas. Erected in 1929, the original forty-foot pole was carved at the end of the 20th century by Haida Indians near Vancouver, British Columbia. James L. Kraft, founder of Kraft, Inc., purchased the pole in 1926 while on a trip to the region and donated it to the City for the benefit of Chicago schoolchildren. In October 1985, the original pole was moved to the

⁷³⁵ P. A. Armstrong, *Shabbona Memorial Association Appeal* (Chicago: NP: ND), Chicago History Museum Archives, Shabbona Memorial Association Appeal Folder.

⁷³⁶ Ira J. Bach and Mary Lackritz Gray, *A Guide to Chicago's Public Sculpture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 156.

University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver. Tony Hunt, a Chicago Kwakiutl artist, was commissioned to carve a replica for the same site, and it was erected the following year.⁷³⁷ At the entrance to Grant Park on Congress Parkway are two stone statues depicting mounted Indian warriors - known as “The Bowman” and “The Spearman.” Created by Ivan Mestrovic and installed in 1928, they were intended to commemorate the first inhabitants of the City.⁷³⁸ The attack near Fort Dearborn by the Potawatomi is also depicted in relief at the bridge crossing the Chicago River at Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive. Elsewhere in the Great Lakes region, reminders of Algonquin residents are prevalent. A forty-foot tall memorial “totem” pole was installed between the first and ninth fairways of a golf course at Peninsula State Park in Fish Creek, Wisconsin. In 1927, Belgian artist C.M. Lesaar carved the pole, the cost of which was underwritten by the Door County Historical Society.⁷³⁹ To a newcomer, one might suspect that the ubiquitous presence of such names reflects a significant effort to honor the memory of the Potawatomi, but the frequency of their occurrence serves more accurately as a sort of “white noise” to drown out the history of ethnic cleansing that still clings to this region.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibid, 19.

⁷³⁹ Seven photographs of drawings depicting scenes from the lives of the Potawatomi people, depicted on the pole, are available. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Archives Visual Materials Holdings, PH 4614, MAD 4/90/E3

4.2 Images from the Chief Menominee Dedication - 1909



Unveiling and dedication of Chief Menominee monument by his granddaughter, Julia Po-ka-gon Sept. 4, 1909, Twin Lakes, Plymouth, Indiana. Julia was the granddaughter of Chief Simon Pokagon.



A photograph of Potawatomi Indians dancing at the dedication ceremony of the Chief Menominee statue in 1909. ⁷⁴⁰

⁷⁴⁰ These photographs and the unveiling program are from Marshall County Public Library, Plymouth, Indiana.



Julia Pokagon strikes a pose with a bow and arrow in front of the tipi/wigwam put up at Twin Lakes, Indiana

Slumber Song of a Vanished Race.

To be sung in Minor, slightly "off key" and drowsily like the sighing of the breeze.

Ty-ah! Ugh, Ty-ah!

A transcription of the song, said to have been sung by the members of Chief Menominee's village at the time of their removal, and played by the band at the unveiling of the Chief Menominee statue. Its authorship is unknown.

UNVEILING OF
Pottawattomie Indian Monument

At Twin Lakes Station, on the Vandalia Railroad,
5 miles south-west of Plymouth,

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1909
At 2 O'clock P. M.

COL. WILLIAM HOYNES, Chairman

Monument Trustees

Col. Alexander F. Fleet, Culver, Indiana
Col. William Hoynes, Notre Dame, Indiana
Charles T. Mattingly, Plymouth, Indiana

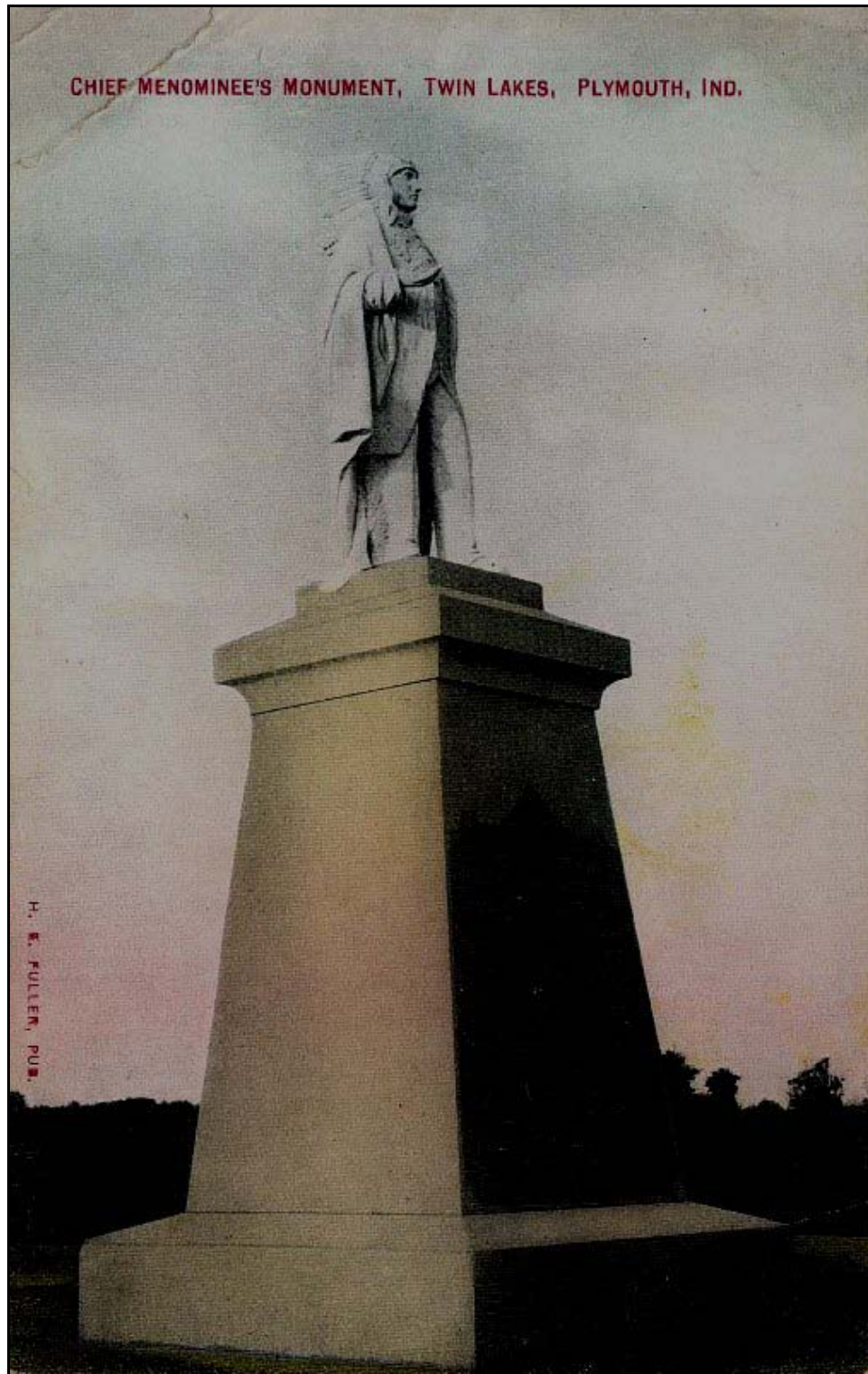
PROGRAM

1. Calling to order by the Chairman.
2. Invocation Very Rev. Andrew Morrissey, Provincial of the Congregation of Holy Cross, or Rev. John Cavanaugh, President of the University of Notre Dame.
3. Overture, Plymouth Band
4. Address, Col. William Hoynes, Chairman
5. Unveiling Address,
. Rev. Ernest C. Wareing, Plymouth
6. Response by Miss Julia Qua-ka-no Po-ka-gon, who will unveil the Monument.
During the unveiling the Band will play, softly and slowly, "The Dirge of a Vanished Race."
7. Historical Address, Daniel McDonald
8. Music, Plymouth Band
9. Address, Congressman Henry A. Barnhart
10. Address, "Civilization and the Indian Race,"
. Michael Williams (Indian)
11. Short Addresses by Visitors and Others.
12. Music and Adjournment.

Over the years, many Indiana residents have expressed remorse over the forced removal of the Potawatomi known as the Trail of Death. Daniel McDonald, of Plymouth, wrote a book, *Removal of the Potawatomie Indians from Northern Indiana*, published in 1899. He was owner and editor of the Plymouth newspaper, elected to the Indiana state legislature and while a legislator introduced a bill to erect a memorial to the Potawatomi. The proposal passed and in 1909, a statue of Chief Menominee was erected and dedicated. McDonald wrote,

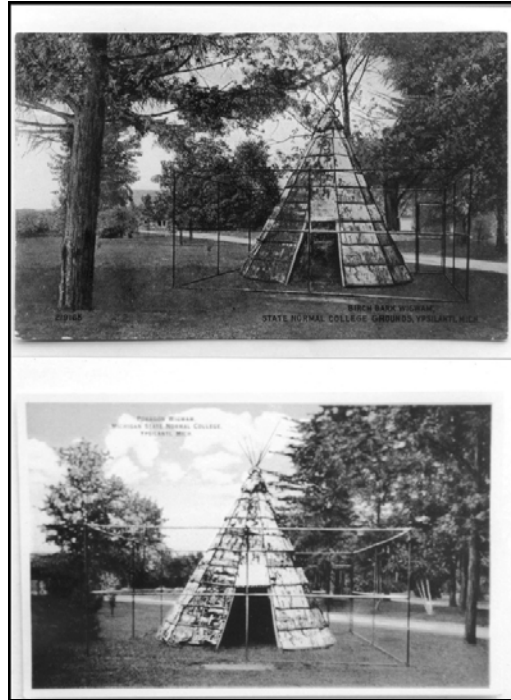
John Novelli, sculptor, was paid \$1,875 by the State of Indiana to create the Chief Menominee statue. Novelli was a graduate of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. While still a student in Rome, he won honorable mention at the 1906 International Exhibition in Paris and later was awarded the coveted Henry O. Avery sculpture prize. He made many war memorials that are landmarks in numerous public squares and buildings in a score of American cities and towns, including Fort Wayne, Indiana and New York City.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴¹ McDonald, 2.



An early postcard of the Chief Menominee statue – issued shortly after its dedication

4.3 Images from the Tipi Installation at Ypsilanti, Michigan



Postcard images of the Pokagon tipi at Eastern Michigan Normal School (now University). The tipi/wigwam was apparently enough of a tourist attraction that it merited at least two postcard versions.



Installation of the Birch bark Monument at Ypsilanti, Michigan. In native dress to the left is Julia Pokagon, with her daughter and husband.

4.4 News Report for the 100th Anniversary Ceremony for Chief Menominee Statue

100th Anniversary Ceremony for Chief Menominee Statue Invitation and contemporary news article: *Chief Menominee still stands tall: 100th anniversary re-dedication ceremony will uncover years of history.*

You are Invited!

100th Anniversary Ceremony for Chief Menominee Statue

Sept. 18, 2009, at 4 p.m. Location: Peach Road south of Plymouth, Indiana.
Directions: South of Plymouth on US 31, turn west at Chief Menominee Monument sign, go 6 miles, turn north on Peach Road. Statue is on east side of Peach Road.

Chief Menominee and his band of Potawatomi were forcibly removed from Indiana to Kansas in 1838, and so many died it is called the Trail of Death. See www.potawatomi-tda.org for pictures, diary and route taken. The statue was erected in 1909, paid for by the State of Indiana.

Supper at 6 p.m. at Menominee Elementary School, 815 Discovery Lane, Plymouth, is \$6.00. This commemoration is sponsored by Wythougan Valley Preservation Council, Plymouth IN and Potawatomi Trail of Death Assn. of Fulton County Historical Society, Rochester IN.

Several Potawatomi who had ancestors on the Trail of Death will attend and take part in this ceremony and also the Trail of Courage festival Sept. 19-20, at Rochester. Article published Sep 14, 2009

Chief Menominee still stands tall: 100th anniversary re-dedication ceremony will uncover years of history.

By VIRGINIA RANSBOTTOM *Tribune Staff Writer*

PLYMOUTH -- It's been 100 years since the Chief Menominee Statue was dedicated. Over the years, vandals made off with the thumb of his outstretched hand and crumbled some fingers, pilfering for coins tossed in his palm.

It's an injustice that is ironically similar to what the monument stands for and why it is still a significant piece of history today.

"Potawatomis have asked that the chain be removed around the pedestal," said re-dedication organizer Mark Gidley.



The Chief Menominee statue was dedicated on Sept. 4, 1909. The note on the vintage photo said the statue was unveiled by the chief's granddaughter, Julia Po-Ka-Gon. A 100-year anniversary rededication ceremony will take place at 4 p.m. Friday. Photo provided/ Marshall County Historical Society

“That’s how Chief Menominee was removed from the land — in chains.”

A 100th anniversary rededication ceremony is planned for Friday at the Chief Menominee Statue site south of Plymouth.

When the statue was unveiled on Sept. 4, 1909, more than a thousand people attended the ceremony, arriving by the long-gone Vandalia Railroad.

Organizers hope just as many attend the ceremony this year.

“It was the only statue of an Indian chief ever paid for by a state legislature and still may be to this day,” said Linda Rippey, director of the Marshall County Museum. “That in itself is significant.”

Gidley said the unveiling in 1909 was more of a political event than a historical event.

“This time, we’ll have Potawatomis instead of politicians,” he said.

“There’s been a lot of history uncovered over the years that needs to be passed on for an accurate account of what happened, so it never happens again.”

The statue marks the area where the route began for the Potawatomi “Trail of Death” march in September of 1838.

Chief Menominee had steadfastly refused to sell his reservation, demanding justice.

However, the Chief was forcibly removed along with his people, who were held at gunpoint by squads of militia. Their village near Twin Lakes was destroyed.

“They were rounded up in a log chapel that was built by Catholics who worked with the Potawatomi,” said Kurt Garner, of the Wythougan Valley Preservation Council.

“A lot of people don’t know they were Christianized.”

More than 850 Potawatamis were marched to present-day Osawatomie, Kan. Most walked the entire 660-mile distance, which took two months.

“Of the 859 who were removed, 759 made it. There were 42 deaths and the rest escaped,” said Trail of Death historian Shirley Willard.

“There was a terrible drought that year and what water they had was stagnant. People were dying of typhoid fever in the villages they passed through along the way and they, too, got sick.”

Several Potawatomi with ancestors on the Trail of Death will attend the 100th anniversary ceremony sponsored by the Wythougan Valley Preservation Council of Plymouth and assisted by the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association of the Fulton County Historical Society, of Rochester.

The ceremony is at 4 p.m. Friday. To get to the monument, go south of Plymouth on U.S. 31, turn west on 13th Road at the Chief Menominee Monument sign. Go six miles, and turn north on Peach Road. The site is on the east side.

Because parking will be along the shoulders of the road, carpooling is requested.

Bring a lawn chair and settle in for a living history lesson.

Several speakers will recount events that led up to the 1838 removal, the Trail of Death, the statue’s dedication and archeological digs to find Menominee’s village.

Children of Menominee Elementary School will sing and sign songs written by storyteller George Schricker. Boy Scouts will post the colors and flags of the Potawatomi nations.

The event is being held in conjunction with the Fulton County Trail of Courage Living History Festival this weekend at the Fulton County Historical Society grounds in Rochester.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴² Virginia Ransbottom, “Chief Menominee still stands tall,” *South Bend Tribune*, September 17, 2009, 1.

5.1 Summary of the Plaintiff's Arguments in Williams v. City of Chicago

The following is a detailed summary of the arguments of the Plaintiff Pokagon Potawatomi in Williams, v. The City of Chicago.⁷⁴³ It is not meant to advocate for the merits of their position. Their claim was denied by both the Federal District and U.S. Supreme Courts. In 2009, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals used the *Williams* case as precedent to deny another land claim, this time by the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma.⁷⁴⁴ However, the sophistication of the following arguments are noteworthy – given that in 1917 most non-Native Americans considered Indians to be savages and the nation was still wrestling with what it called “the Indian problem” – whether Indians could be successfully civilized and assimilated into the mainstream. Although not a winning argument, and perhaps not even persuasive to the reader, there is cohesion to it and a historical and legal basis for it that dispels the stereotype of Indians as being hapless wards of the federal government. While there are many other similarly impressive examples of Native activism during this era that dispel that notion, as well, few are aware of the particulars of the Pokagon Potawatomi claim to the Chicago lakefront.

Summary of the Plaintiffs' Arguments: Factual Arguments

I. TITLE PRIOR TO 1763:

Prior to 1763, Great Britain, France, and Spain claimed North America by virtue of their rights to “discovery” and “occupation.” The doctrines of possession were under the so-called rules of International Law promulgated by the Europeans. These laws gave

⁷⁴³ Transcript of Record, Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1917, No. 128, *John Williams, Chief, Michael Williams, Secretary, et al., Appellants, vs. City of Chicago, Illinois Central Railroad Company, et al.*, Briefs of the Appellants and Appellees, National Repository for U.S. Supreme Court Briefs, Hutchins Hall, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷⁴⁴ See footnote 73 and accompanying text.

Europeans the right to colonize and assert jurisdiction over all lands discovered by their subjects, which were not inhabited by what “they” considered to be civilized people.

These claims were necessarily subject to the prior ownership of the soil by the indigenous tribes already inhabiting the “discovered” land. The “ownership interest” of the Indians to the land is called “Indian Title.” Indian Title is described as their right to occupy the land subject to the right of the Euro-Americans to negotiate its cession. The claims of France and Spain to North America were eliminated by the treaties made in 1763, after the French and Indian Wars. The exclusive right of Great Britain, as a discovering country, to the whole of what later became known as the Northwest Territory, including Chicago, was acknowledged by all of the European powers.

2. FROM 1763 TO 1783

This was a period of great struggle and conflict, as the American colonies asserted their independence from England. During this period no treaties were made with any of the Indian tribes, either by Great Britain or the United States, or by any of the individual states or colonies. Thus, during this period, the status quo was maintained and nothing affected ownership of the territory later to become the City of Chicago.

3. NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AFTER 1783

The Revolutionary War was concluded by the Treaty of Paris, on September 3, 1783. Article II of the Treaty fixes the boundaries between the United States and Great Britain; drawing boundaries through Lakes Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior. These boundary lines that settled U.S. territory included all of the original 13 colonies, as well as an area later to be known as the Northwest Territory. The Treaty of Paris was recognition by Great Britain of its giving up any claim over this land. But Indians were

not included in the Treaty negotiations nor were they signatories to the Treaty of Paris. Therefore, that Treaty represented only a relinquishment, by Great Britain, to the United States, of the right of entering into treaties with those Tribes located in the Northwest Territory, for any cession of their tribal lands. Clearly, Great Britain did not, and could not, give to the United States, by the Treaty of Paris, any territory of the American Indians in the Great Lakes region.

During the period of the Articles of Confederation, Virginia ceded its claim to the Northwest Territory to the Federal Government. This was called the “Virginia Cessions.” Included in that cession by Virginia was any claim to the territory now called Chicago, which Virginia had originally claimed under its colonial charter, and by virtue of the “conquests” made by its Colonel George Rogers Clark.

4. TITLE AFTER 1787— ORDINANCE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY

On July 13, 1787, the Congress of the United States enacted an “Ordinance for the Government of the Northwest Territory”, covering the lands northwest of the Ohio River, including what is now Chicago. The Ordinance is a part of the organic law of the United States, as essential to what America is, as the Declaration of Independence of 1776, the Articles of Confederation adopted 1777-1783, and the Constitution of the United States, adopted in 1787. Section 14 of the Ordinance reads as follows:

It is hereby ordained and declared by the authority aforesaid, that the following articles shall be considered as articles of compact, between the original States and the people and States in the said territory, and forever remain unalterable, unless by common consent.

The Northwest Ordinance has never been altered and remains in full force and effect. Article III, which by its very terms shall remain unalterable forever, places good faith towards the Indians on the same basis as religion, morality, and knowledge. It states:

Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property rights, and liberty, they never shall be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded upon justice and humanity shall from time to time, be made, for preventing wrongs being done to them, and preserving peace and friendship with them.

The Northwest Ordinance clearly recognized the Indian ownership of their tribal lands within the territory. As organic law, the Northwest Ordinance, and its promise of good faith and fair dealing towards Indians, is as sacred as our Constitution. The property rights of the Indians in that territory, including to the lands now comprising Chicago, are protected by that Congressional mandate and commitment. Any title to the Chicago lakefront, which existed in 1787, that was not extinguished by a later treaty cession by the Indians, exists today with the same force as in 1787.

5. THE TREATY OF GREENVILLE (1795)

Serious hostilities, nonetheless, prevailed in the Northwest Territory until 1795, when a treaty of peace, land cession and boundary was negotiated between the Indians and Major General Anthony Wayne. The United States and the twelve Indian Nations who were parties to the Treaty of Greenville gave, to the other side, an absolute title to the land on their respective side of demarcation. Therefore, these Indian Tribes held a straightforward ownership of their lands in the Northwest Territory and not merely the “Indian title” of right to possession later described by Justice Marshall in *Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 U.S.

(8 Wheat.) 543, (1823). In support of this, Article IV of the Treaty of Greenville states that the United States is “relinquishing” its claim to those lands north of the Ohio River.

Article V of the Treaty contains a recitation that the Indians shall have a right “to those lands...quietly to enjoy them, haunting, planting and dwelling thereon...” Each of the twelve Tribes who signed the Treaty of Greenville, including the Potawatomi, had an ownership in the Northwest Territory. That fact was recognized as so by the United States and was why each tribe was a participant in the Treaty.

The Indians who signed the later Treaty of Chicago in 1833 as the “United Nations of Ottawas, Chippewas and Potawatomis” were more properly understood to be the Potawatomi Indian Nation, among whom Ottawa and Chippewa people also resided. At the beginning of the 18th Century, the area, which is now Chicago, was, without dispute, Potawatomi territory. (Citing Bulletin 30, Vol. 2, of the Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnology).

In 1795, the Indians also ceded sixteen parcels of land on the Indian side of the boundary line created by the Treaty of Greenville. Parcel 14 included a part of what is now Chicago, and was described as “One piece of land six miles square at the mouth of the Chicago River emptying into the southwest end of Lake Michigan, where a fort (Fort Dearborn) formerly stood.” Importantly, that cession, like all later cessions affecting Chicago, used the shore of Lake Michigan as a boundary line, and did not cede any of the lakebed itself to the Americans.

6. LATER TREATIES

Treaties negotiated after the Treaty of Greenville confirm Potawatomi ownership to all the lands bordering the lower western shore of Lake Michigan. Those treaties (with date of ratification by the United States Senate) include:

- Treaty of St. Louis (1816)
- Treaty of Chicago (1821)
- Treaty of Wabash (1826)
- Treaty of Chicago (1828)
- Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe (1832)
- Treaties of Tippecanoe River (1832)
- Treaty of Chicago (1833)

In all of the subsequent treaties entered into by the Potawatomi, the ceded lands only extended to the shore of Lake Michigan. None of the treaties involved a land cession of Lake Michigan or its bed. All of the cessions of land by the Indians, after the Treaty of Greenville, to lands in what is now Illinois, were by metes and bounds and ran to the shoreline of Lake Michigan only. Later treaties that did not include that Lake or its bed were:

- Treaty of St. Louis (1816)
- Treaty of Prairie du Chien (1829) Article I
- Treaty of Tippecanoe (1832)
- Treaty of Chicago (1833) Article I

All of these treaties confirmed Potawatomi ownership of the area of Chicago and any land cessions ran only to the shore of Lake Michigan. None of the land cessions, involving territory in what is now Illinois, included any islands, lakebed, sandbars or submerged lands of Lake Michigan. Prior to 1871 and the end of treaty making with Indian tribes, there was no way to take away title/ownership of Indian lands, except (a) by conquest or (b) voluntary cession from the Indians to the federal government.

The significance of the above failure to include the bed of Lake Michigan at Chicago in any treaty cessions is substantial. In other cessions of lands in the Northwest Territory, bordering other parts of Lake Michigan or even other Great Lakes, those cessions expressly included parts of the lakes, and the boundaries of those cessions ran into and across the lakes. The Treaty of Greenville specifically includes the cession of Mackinac Island and DeBois Blanc Island in paragraph 13; the Treaty of Fort Industry (1805) draws a boundary into Lake Erie; the Treaty of Detroit (1807) Article 1 draws a line thru the Sinclair River, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Lake Erie; the Treaty of Miami of Lake Erie (1817) specifically includes a portion of Lake Erie; in the Treaty of Saginaw (1819) Article 2, an island in Saginaw Bay was reserved specifically for the Indians because the rest of Lake Erie was ceded to the Whites; the Treaty of Washington (1836) with the Ottawa and Chippewa Nations, Article 1, specifically included in its territory parts of Lake Superior and Green Bay, Article 3 includes Beaver Island; the Treaty of Detroit (1837) land cessions include an island specified to be within Saginaw Bay; the Treaty of La Pointe of Lake Superior (1842) Article 1, draws lines into Lake Superior. The only reasonable conclusion is that when the parties intended to include bodies of water, lakebed or islands in the cessions, they did so.

None of the later treaties by the Potawatomi that ceded their lands south of the Milwaukee River in Wisconsin or the Grand River in Michigan included any part of Lake Michigan. All of the treaties were either silent on the matter or used the shoreline of Lake Michigan as an identifying marker and boundary. Furthermore, Parcel 13 of the Treaty of Greenville included a cession of an island in Lake Michigan. Thus, it is clear the remainder of Lake Michigan remained the territory of the Indians.

Nothing passes in an Indian Treaty by implication. And ambiguities are resolved in favor of the Indians. Citing Winters v. United States, 207 U.S. 564 (1908). Fishing was of such importance to the subsistence of Indians, that they would not have conveyed the lake unless clearly and specifically. Since the boundary of the land cessions was set by the shoreline, later additions to the shore or changes in the shore are not included in the land cession. If the bed of a lake, including Lake Michigan, is later filled in and turned into shore land, its ownership stays with the original owner of the submerged land, here the Potawatomi. The rights of the Potawatomi under the Treaty of Greenville were reaffirmed in the Treaty of St. Louis of 1816. That latter treaty involved lands that are now Chicago, and specifically guaranteed all prior treaties, (including the Treaty of Greenville,) were to be given “full force and effect.” The same rights and assurances were confirmed in the Treaty of Potawatomi Creek. (1846).

Legal Arguments

1. In 1871, when Congress ended treaty making with the tribes, it guaranteed that those treaties already made would be enforced.
2. The Treaty of Greenville awarded Lake Michigan to the Indians until ceded by them. Thus, legal doctrines of property law, such as abandonment, adverse possession, riparian rights and shore accretion, or statute of limitations, cannot apply to deprive the Indians of their continued ownership.
3. The Provisions of the Treaty of Greenville are part of the Supreme Law of the United States under Article Six of the U.S. Constitution. No provisions of that treaty can be altered, except by Congress, and then only by specific act. Such has never been done.

4. Later filling in of the lake, reclaiming, and improvement of the land, including the building of parks, buildings, homes or railroads could not affect the fact that the lakebed was never ceded by the Indians.
5. Courts have no discretion and must enforce all of the provisions of a treaty, including the Treaty of Greenville, which gave the Indians ownership of the bed of Lake Michigan.
6. The property could not have been lost to the failure to pay property tax, as it was never allotted or placed upon tax rolls in proper fashion.
7. Since the United States never acquired title from the Indians of Lake Michigan lakebed, the State of Illinois could not acquire the current lakefront of Chicago from the federal government as a part of its admission as a state; the state could only take what title the federal government had, which was none. Therefore, the State of Illinois had no legal authority to convey the property in question to any individuals, institutions, municipalities or corporations.
8. The legal doctrine of abandonment does not apply because the Indians did not abandon their ownership of the land by any affirmative act. The mere fact that the Indians did not “occupy” the land, or the lakebed, does not amount to an abandonment of their legal interest in the land.
9. The United States Government, and this Court, are duty bound to carry out the obligations of all the treaties made with these Indians.
10. The “Reserved Rights Doctrine” must be applied to this case; it provides that “what is not given away in treaty is retained or reserved by the Indian tribe.” Thus,

because the Potawatomi never ceded their interest in the lakebed, now lakefront of Chicago, they still retain ownership over that property.

11. The “Canons of Treaty Construction” compel that any Court hearing this claim follow certain rules of treaty interpretation:

- a. Treaties are to be construed broadly in determining the existence of Indian rights, but narrowly when considering the elimination or diminishment of those rights under a treaty.
- b. Treaty terms must be interpreted as the Potawatomi would have understood them at the time of the negotiation. Here, Lake Michigan was of substantial importance to the subsistence of the Indians. It is clear from the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, that the Pokagon Potawatomi had no intention of even removing west and leaving their lake.
- c. Any ambiguities in the language of a treaty must be resolved in favor of the Indians.

Conclusions

The Pokagon Potawatomi argued, that based upon the facts and law, the lakefront east of the boundary established by the shore of Lake Michigan remained the rightful unceded territory of the Potawatomi. The courts were not convinced. Yet, the argument of the Indians was no less compelling than George W. Streeter’s who made his own claim to the same lands. While Cap’n Streeter and his “District of Lake Michigan” are well known among most scholars of Chicago history, the same claim of the Potawatomi has been pushed to the margins of memory except for those within the Tribe.

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