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THE SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA AND THEIR LOST TREATY:

"WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE"

by

Joseph R McGeshick

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Arts

in

History

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

The Sokaogon Chippewa struggled for years in northern Wisconsin to retain their traditional land which provided all the necessities of life. Researching Sokaogon history from 1826 to the early 1850s reveals that the Sokaogon enjoyed separate recognition from the federal government, as an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa. However, the federal government, with the eager support of the Euroamerican population in the state, attempted to consolidate as many of the different Lake Superior Chippewa groups as possible to make room for the influx of settlers, miners and timbermen. According to Sokaogon oral tradition, and supported by contemporary Chippewa historians and scholars, the Sokaogon negotiated and signed a treaty sometime between 1854 and 1855. Unfortunately, the treaty, and an accompanying map outlining a reservation of some twelve square miles, was lost before being ratified by Congress. Some eighty years passed before the government recognized the Sokaogon as a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa. By the late 1930s they were a federally recognized tribe with a reservation, though it was considerably smaller than their traditional territory. The lost treaty, or more importantly the negotiations between the Sokaogon and the government, are crucial to the Sokaogon's future. My research consisted of many primary documents such as personal letters and memorandums from government officials as well as treaties and other government documents. The Sokaogon Archives at Mole Lake and the Wisconsin State Historical Society proved very valuable. My study brought to light the different stories behind the lost treaty and demonstrates that even though no treaty presently exists, and may never have, the negotiations which took place in 1854-55 proved that the government recognized the Sokaogon as an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa only to retract it after realizing that they could group them with another larger group of Lake Superior Chippewa, which resulted in clearing title to more aboriginal land.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

For the Sokaogon Chippewa, the treaty negotiations that took place between 1826 and the 1850s proved critical to the future shape of their legal, political, and economic relationships with the federal and local governments and agencies. During that period, the Sokaogon did not fight any spectacular military battles or experience any major direct assault on their populations, as did so many other tribes. Sokaogon social, cultural and political leaders met peacefully with government officials whose objectives consisted of negotiating with various autonomous Indian groups for the exclusive purpose of gaining title to Indian lands.

The Sokaogon chiefs signed numerous treaties over a twenty-five year period, however the particular negotiations and events which took place between 1854 and 1856 resulted in a loss of political and economic leverage for the Sokaogon in their future relations with federal, state and local governments. During those two years, the Sokaogon negotiated as a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa in hope of obtaining a reservation within what was once their traditional territory. That effort failed and the government denied them recognition as a separate and autonomous

group of Chippewa, entitled to their own reservation land.

The Sokaogon hence have been stigmatized with the label "lost tribe." Even though they negotiated with the federal government for two generations in the first half of the 19th century, the lack of a separate treaty recognizing their autonomy, shaped tribal character in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although there is much written concerning the 1854-56 negotiations between the federal government and the Sokaogon, the actual document was never ratified by Congress and its whereabouts is a mystery. The story of the Sokaogon "lost treaty" illustrates how a group of self-sufficient Chippewa, who once commanded federal attention and recognition, became an unrecognized and destitute community lacking the very land they used and managed for generations.

The implications of the lost treaty and accompanying map of what was to be the Sokaogon reservation are immense in light of the tribe's political, social, and economic survival. Without the treaty, the tribe has no claim to the resources of their traditional territory in northern Wisconsin. The treaty represents ensured economic prosperity for future generations. Yes, the tribe received recognition and a reservation under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, but the amount of land is substantially smaller than the area of land the Sokaogon traditionally controlled and managed. The treaties the tribe signed,

especially in 1847 and 1854, reveal an evolving pattern of government attitudes toward Sokaogon autonomy. At various times they were treated as a separate community and as a branch of another larger group of Chippewa.

However, by 1860 the Sokaogon lost their separate status and their identity as a self-sufficient community. They became the "lost tribe," a condition which plagued and continues to plague them.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

The names "Chippewa," "Ojibway," and "Anishinabe" are used to refer to a large group of Algonkian-speaking Indians residing in the western Great Lakes culture area. The names Chippewa and Ojibway are Euroamerican derivations which early traders, missionaries, and government agents adopted in place of the traditional Anishinabe name. Anishinabe is a description which translates as "from whence lowered the male of the species."¹

The name Chippewa is a corruption of Ojibway. The Reverend Frederic Baraga, a missionary who lived among the Indians of the Great Lakes in the mid-19th century, wrote that these Indians' proper name was "Otchipewa." They were closely related to the Ottawa, Potawatami, and Menomini.² The French first called them Saulteaux, or People of the Falls, because early explorers and traders found them near present-day Sault St. Marie.³ William Warren, interpreter, trapper, trader, and of French and Chippewa ancestry, lived in the western Great Lakes area in the 1830s and 1840s and wrote a manuscript describing Chippewa history and culture in 1853, though his work did not become available

until 1885. Warren offered two descriptions of the name Ojibway. He claimed Chippewa informants told him it described the fashion of Chippewa moccasins, which had a puckered seam which ran over the middle of the foot. From the language he translated: o-jib, "pucker up" and ub-way, "to roast." Warren referred to the Chippewa method of torturing their enemies with fire in the revenge killing and blood feud tradition and offers this as one of the possible meanings for the term Ojibway.⁴

Whichever term one uses, all refer to a group of Indians who at one time were one of the largest Indian tribes in North America and controlled the majority of the territory surrounding Great Lakes.⁵ According to Chippewa oral tradition, their ancestors migrated from what is now New Brunswick to the Great Lakes area and eventually adopted a seasonal life of harvesting wild rice and maple sugar, fishing pickerel and muskee, and hunting moose, deer, and other game.⁶ That migration must have occurred well before 1600. Anthropologist Harold Hickerson identified present-day Sault St. Marie as the center of Chippewa territory in 1600. He further reported that by the early eighteenth century, bands of Chippewa not only populated the region around Lake Superior, but also expanded into the region of Lake Winnipeg and Manitoba, into the swamps southwest of James Bay, and parts of the upper Red River.⁷

Edward Benton-Banai, Chippewa teacher and historian,

traced the Chippewa migration into the Great Lakes and tells of them reaching Sault St. Marie, or as the Chippewa referred to the area; Ba-wa-ting or Place of the Falls. Here the Chippewa split into two major groups, while other small offshoot groups ventured into Canada and still others remained in the central Great Lakes area. One of the larger groups made their way northward around Lake Superior (Kitichi-Gami), while another group travelled the lake's southern shore. They eventually met at present-day Duluth, but the Sioux (Dakota) were too strong and forced the Chippewa onto Madeline Island, or LaPointe, near what is now the northernmost point of Wisconsin.⁸ Warren described the Chippewa siege on the island lasting for three generations. Starting around 1610 the Chippewa began to evacuate the island. Some migrated back to Sault St. Marie while other groups ventured west into the lakes and rivers of Minnesota and south into northern Wisconsin.⁹

The reason the Chippewa could finally leave LaPointe was probably due to their increased confidence in military confrontations with the Sioux and other tribes. Although the Chippewa did not possess firearms at this time, their increased numbers and familiarity with the surrounding territory allowed them to push into and hold the wild rice and hunting areas. Warren stated that the "Ojibwa gained courage and leaving LaPointe, they pitched their lodges in the adjacent Chequamogee Bay and hunted the larger animals

which abounded in the vicinity."¹⁰ Warren reported another, more sinister interpretation of the Chippewa dispersal: "...the Evil Spirit had found a strong foothold amongst them. Evil practices became in vogue; horrid feasts on human flesh became a custom."¹¹

The reason for the Chippewa dispersal may have been cannibalism due to crop failure or Sioux pressure which prohibited them from venturing off the island to obtain sufficient subsistence. Whether cannibalism or the gaining of courage and military strength prompted them, the Chippewa began their push for the control of the wild rice and hunting areas surrounding western Lake Superior. By 1670 the Chippewa had firmly established themselves in that area.¹²

It was about the same time when French explorers initially encountered Chippewa Indians. Samuel Champlain first met them on the eastern boundary of Lake Huron and commented on a vicious battle they fought with the Iroquois. By 1634 the Chippewa began bringing fur to Quebec and in 1665 the French Jesuit Claude Allouez visited the Lake Superior Chippewa living on and near LaPointe.¹³ The increased contact and trade with Europeans enabled the Chippewa to obtain firearms which greatly assisted them in keeping their expanded territory.

The Chippewa became energetic participants in the French fur trade. The struggle between European powers for dominance of the Great Lakes from the sixteenth century to

1763 altered the power structure of Indians of the Great Lakes. The Chippewa came to dominate that structure with the help of the French and later the English. In their efforts to establish colonial supremacy in the Great Lakes both nations created alliances with the Chippewa and other tribes. The Chippewa, like many other Great Lakes tribes, were drawn into those alliances for their own self-interest. The promise of trade goods and the opportunity for revenge against Sioux and other enemies tempted the Chippewa who eventually became important players in the European-Indian struggle over land, political power and economic wealth.¹⁴

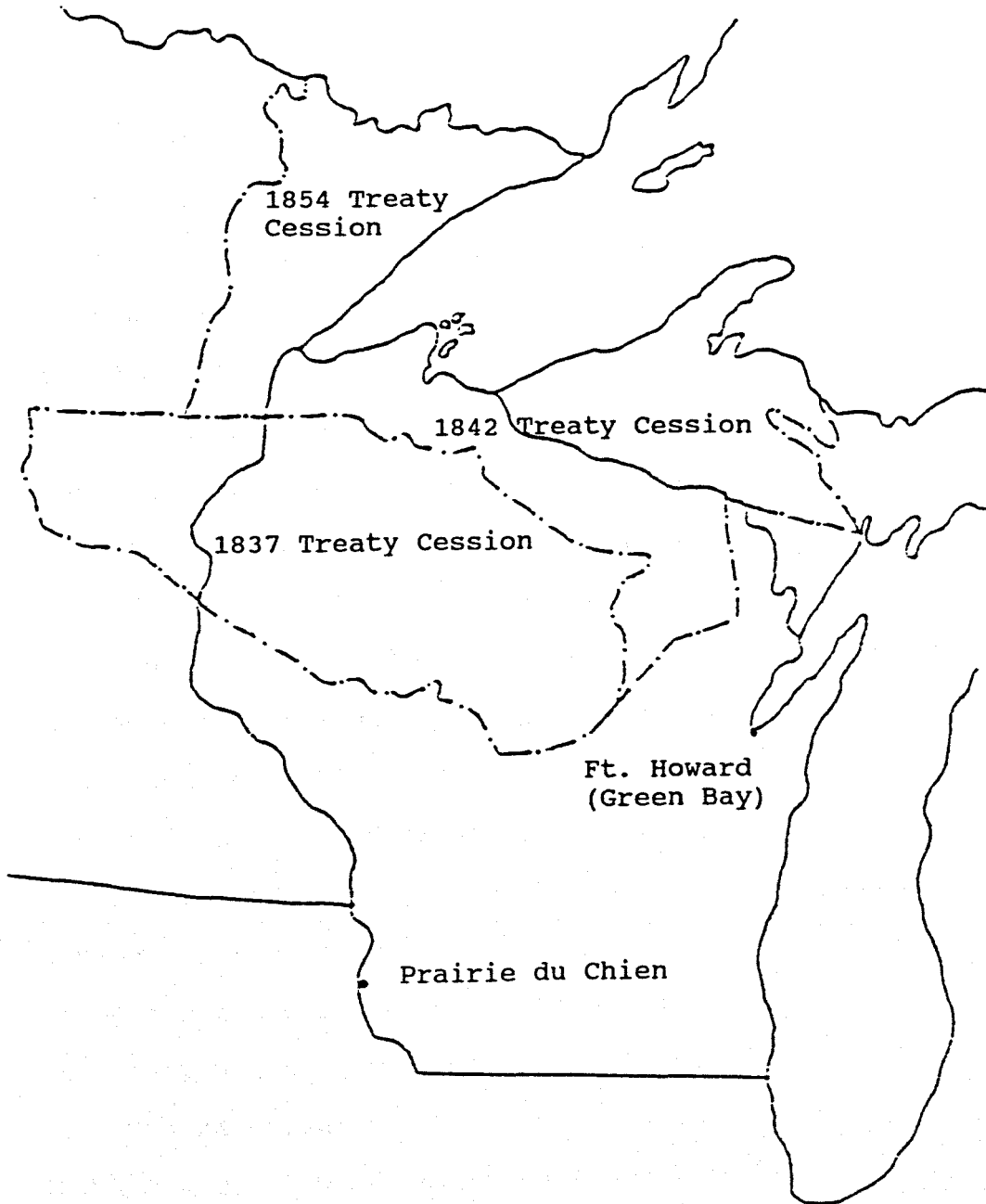
The Chippewa succeeded in overtaking the northern part of the Sauk and Fox territory by the beginning of the eighteenth century. By the 1750s they established a firm foothold west of Lake Superior in what is now the northern part of Minnesota. While the Lake Superior Chippewa were expanding in the western Great Lakes, their eastern relatives who remained near Sault St. Marie extended their influence into the area between Lakes Huron and Erie, traditional Iroquois land.¹⁵ In 1763 the French were defeated in their colonial war with Great Britain and British political influence dominated Chippewa life until the early nineteenth century when American fur traders and land speculators began their push into Chippewa territory.

As British settlements grew from a small and fairly

unorganized group of colonies to a powerful independent nation, the U.S. government found a need to establish an Indian policy which would enable them to deal with tribes in a legal manner, especially when the transfer of aboriginal title to land and resources were involved. The Chippewa were residents of the Old Northwest and the policy which developed in that area was designed to acquire land, through treaty, to accommodate the movement of settlers into the region.¹⁶

In 1825 Indian Bureau Superintendent William Clark and Michigan Territorial governor Lewis Cass met with the Lake Superior Chippewa and other western Great Lakes tribes at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin Territory, and negotiated a treaty which provided for peace and a commitment to future reduction of Indian lands.¹⁷ The success of that and later treaties in obtaining title to Chippewa land and resources is demonstrated in the diminution of land controlled and managed by the Lake Superior Chippewa. (See FIGURE 1) Hundreds of thousands of acres passed out of Chippewa possession and control leaving them with sometimes meager holdings, which lacked sufficient natural resources to maintain traditional tribal culture and forced the Indians into a life of dependency and indigence.

FIGURE 1 LAND CESSIONS OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA



Danziger, Edmund J., Jr., The Chippewas of Lake Superior, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

CHAPTER 3

THE TREATY PERIOD

Beginning in 1826, the government negotiated a series of treaties with the Lake Superior Chippewa. Once treaty making became the accepted method of legally extinguishing Indian land titles in exchange for annuities, protection and federal recognition, the Sokaogon realized that their participation was required if they were to enjoy treaty benefits like other Chippewa groups. Through 1855 the Sokaogon participated in five of these treaties.¹ (See Appendix A for a list of treaties)

In 1826 Chiefs Ki-ji-ua-be-she-shi, or Big Martin, and Mee-gee-see, or Eagle, signed the treaty at Fond du Lac of Lake Superior. Big Martin was the father of Eagle and both were chiefs of the Sokaogon. During Big Martin's chieftainship, approximately from the 1820s to the late 1840s, the Sokaogon numbered around 700. These two chiefs were the group's principal representatives over a thirty year period of treaty negotiations with the government.²

The negotiations at Fond du Lac were aimed at strengthening the U.S. government's influence in the Lake Superior and upper Mississippi River region. Since Zebulon Pike's

official visit to the area and subsequent treaty negotiations, the Americans realized British influence must be checked. In 1820 there was a special government commission sent to the area to inform the Indians that they were under U.S. jurisdiction. General Lewis Cass, future Michigan territorial governor and a principal negotiator of Chippewa treaties, was the leader of the commission. Despite an insidious attempt by the British to turn the Chippewa and other tribes against American influence, the commission was successful and paved the way for future negotiations. In 1825 a meeting was held at Prairie du Chien to terminate the traditional hostilities between the Chippewa and other tribes, especially the Sioux and to recognize tribal boundaries.³ The negotiations and subsequent treaty at Prairie du Chief vested the U.S. government with exclusive treaty negotiation privileges.

The negotiations at Fond du Lac were held only a year after the Prairie du Chien treaty. The government's main objective at Fond du Lac was to include the different bands who did not attend the 1825 treaty negotiations. The treaty stipulated:

"and whereas, owing to the remote and dispersed situation of the Chippewas, full deputations of their different bands did not attend at Prairie du Chien, which circumstance, from the loose nature of the Indian government, would render the Treaty of doubtful obligation, with respect to the bands not represented"⁴

The Fond du Lac treaty was a direct result of an article in

the Prairie du Chien treaty in which the U.S. agreed to explain more fully the treaty's specific stipulations and full effect to bands not present at the 1825 negotiations as well as those which were in attendance.⁵

At Fond du Lac the Chippewa chiefs agreed with 1825 treaty which established boundaries and peace. Thomas McKenney, then Commissioner of Indian Affairs, writing about the Fond du Lac treaty, reported that he witnessed its negotiations and its signing. He stated that "It is true, even the cross (X mark) is made for the signer, and he only puts the nib of the pen on it."⁶ McKenney also reported on the use of whiskey at Fond du Lac. He described the scene as the barrel was placed in the center of the treaty area:

"Indians were gathered, in close and firm order, every Indian pressing in to this common center and stretching his neck between the heads and over the shoulders of others who had the happiness to be nearer it."⁷

That was not the only time the government used whiskey to entice Chippewa during and after treaty negotiations. In the 1840s Reverend Frederic Baraga reports its use at an annuity payment in 1847 at LaPointe.⁸

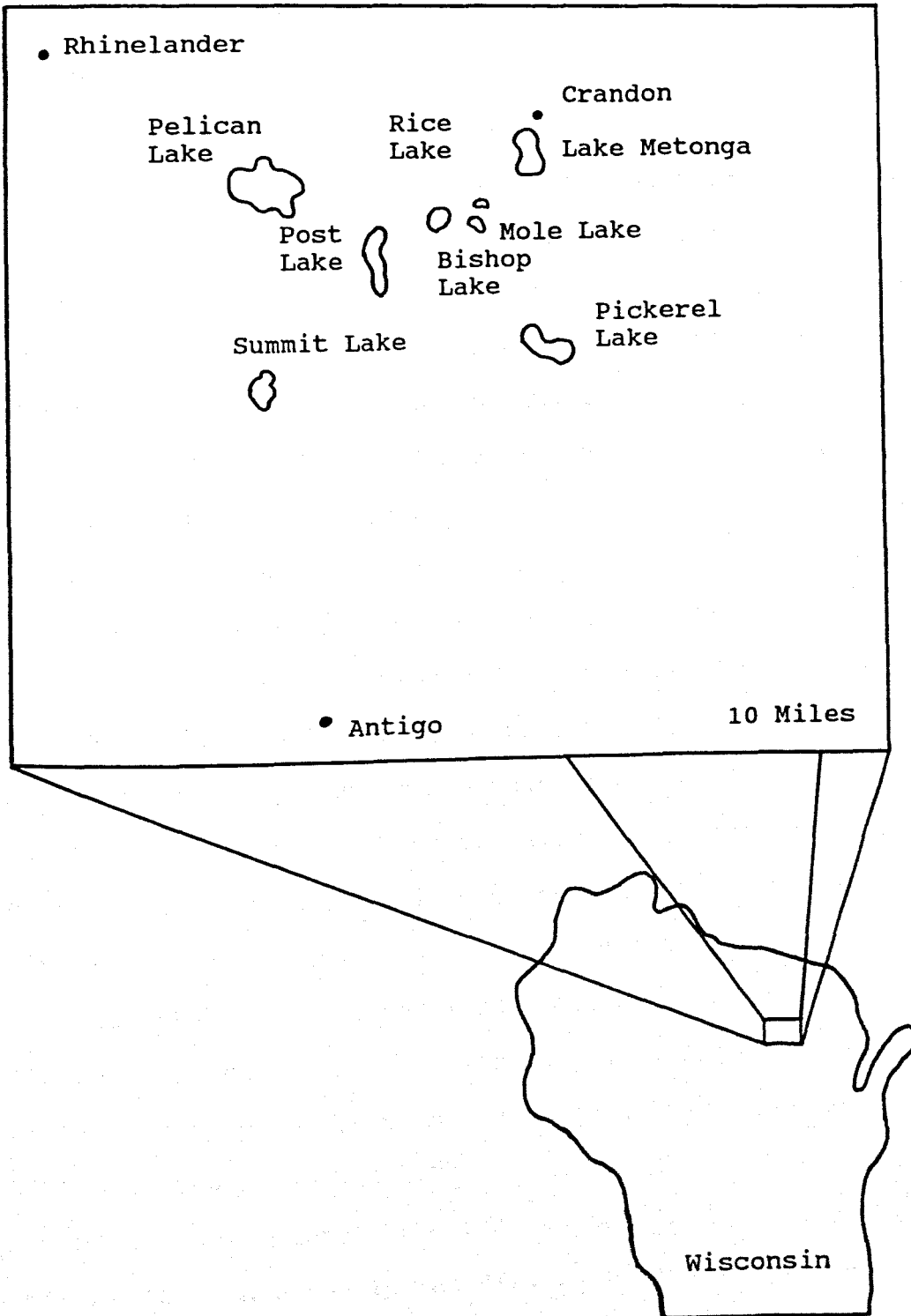
In 1842 the government negotiated another treaty with the Chippewa of Lake Superior. Big Martin and Ke-kon-o-tum signed as representatives of the Lake Bands, though Big Martin was the principal negotiator. That treaty was signed at LaPointe and ceded a large portion of Chippewa land in Northern Wisconsin and the western half of Michigan's Upper

Peninsula. Many Chippewa residing in this area were removed to lands in Minnesota and by 1854 only a few groups, including the Sokaogon, remained on the Wisconsin ceded territory.⁹

Article III of the treaty stipulated that when the time arrived for the removal of the Sokaogon and other Chippewa still living in the ceded area, lands in Minnesota were to be set aside for them to hold as common property.¹⁰ Robert Stuart, the commissioner for the government, in his letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. Hautley Crawford wrote of a half-breed who made a map of the ceded territory and the common property reserved for "the Indians party to the treaty, whenever they may be required to remove from their present residence."¹¹ The government's main intention in the 1842 treaty was to acquire the rich mineral deposits and vast timber resources in Wisconsin and Michigan.¹²

In the 1842 ceded area the Sokaogon managed and controlled an area of about forty square miles centering around the Mole, Rice, Post, Pelican, Pickerel, Sand (now called Metonga, south of present-day Crandon), and Summit Lakes.¹³ (See FIGURE 2) The resources of that area enabled the Sokaogon to live as an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa who, by use and management, established themselves as the political entity whom the government recognized as holders of that areas aboriginal title.¹⁴ The government's intent was very clear, to extinguish

FIGURE 2 RESERVATION BOUNDARIES OF THE LOST TREATY



Chippewa title to the ceded area, allowing small groups to remain only until the government prepared and was ready for their removal.¹⁵

More white settlers moving into the territories of Wisconsin and Minnesota forced the government to negotiate another treaty which involved the Sokaogon in 1847. Big Martin was again the group's principal negotiator. In this treaty the Sokaogon are referred to as the Pelican Lake Chippewa. More land was ceded by the various Lake Superior Chippewa bands in exchange for a \$17,000 payment in specie and future annuity payments.¹⁶

In 1848 Wisconsin became a state and the push for the removal of the remaining Chippewa became so great that by 1850 President Zachary Taylor ordered the Chippewa living in the 1842 and 1847 ceded areas to move to land described in the 1842 treaty. Taylor issued that order despite the request of a delegation of Chippewa, who had travelled to Washington a year earlier, in hope of securing portions of their traditional lands in Wisconsin. The Chippewa complained that they had not agreed to leave their traditional lands in the treaties of 1842 and 1847. They claimed that they had only agreed to sell the timber and minerals in the ceded areas.¹⁷

Indian Commissioner Luke Lea recommended in his annual report of 1850 that the Indian Affairs office institute a policy for those Chippewa living in the ceded areas. The

commissioner stated:

"Since the treaties of 1837 and 1842, with the Chippewa, a considerable portion of those Indians have continued, by sufferance, to reside on the ceded lands east of the Mississippi River, in Wisconsin and Minnesota, where they have for some years been brought to injurious contact with our rapidly advancing and increasing population in that quarter."¹⁸

Lea recommended that Congress be asked for an appropriation for a "joint treaty" with those Chippewa groups still residing in the ceded areas in hope of acquiring as much land as possible. That policy was designed to concentrate the remaining Lake Superior Chippewa into restricted areas which in turn would assist in the rapid settlement of emigrants in that area.¹⁹

Nevertheless, despite the government's direct attempt to remove the Chippewa, only a few of the groups were relocated from Wisconsin. By 1854 it was clear that their removal would not take place. In 1854 the government negotiated yet another treaty with the Chippewa. During those negotiations, which took place at LaPointe, the government formally abandoned the removal policy and established four reservations for various groups of Chippewa who remained in the ceded areas.²⁰ Later that year the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reported on the issue of allowing the Lake Superior Chippewa to remain on the lands they occupied in the ceded areas:

"There are, however, within the limits of Wisconsin, and also within the northern peninsula

of Michigan, and a few small bands of the Chippewa of Lake Superior, who still occupy their former locations on lands ceded by the treaties of 1837 and 1842. It has not, thus far, been found necessary or practicable to remove them. They are very unwilling to relinquish their present residences, as are all the other bands of the same Indians; and it may be necessary to permit them all to remain, in order to acquire a cession of the large tract of country they still own east of the Mississippi, which, on account of its great mineral resources, it is an object of material importance to obtain. They would require but small reservations; and thus permanently settled, the efforts made for their improvement will be rendered more effectual."²¹

Eventually the Chippewa not only ceded their remaining common land, but they also relinquished their claim to the lands which were reserved for them under the removal policy, west of the Mississippi. In 1854 six separate tracts of land were withheld from public sale for the use of various Chippewa groups in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, northern Wisconsin, and northern Minnesota. For the Chippewa of northern Wisconsin, three reservations were created for the large communities living around Lac Courte Oreille and Lac du Flambeau and for the smaller group living in the area around LaPointe.²²

1854 and 1855 were crucial years for the Sokaogon. Because they were one of the smaller bands who acted as the southern vanguard of Lake Superior Chippewa territory, and also because the government wanted to consolidate their negotiations in the wake of the failed Chippewa removal, by 1856 the Sokaogon were no longer treated as a separate band

by government officials.

In 1855 Chief Mee-gee-see of the Sokaogon Chippewa attended an annuity payment at LaPointe on Madeline Island with other bands of the Lake Superior Chippewa. This payment, which consisted of manufactured goods such as blankets, knives, calico and other materials which seemed to make life a little easier to the Lake Superior Chippewa, satisfied the final terms of the 1854 treaty between the Chippewa and the government. Mee-gee-see complained to Commissioner George W. Manypenny that his tribe had no land and was not a branch of one of the larger Lake Superior Chippewa. He protested that his group, known today as the Sokaogon Chippewa Community of Mole, had established themselves as a separate and autonomous community with whom the government had negotiated with since 1826.²³

Mee-gee-see had inherited the role of head chief of the Sokaogon from his father, Big Martin. He stated to the Commissioner that his people, the Sokaogon, had no "right of location upon any of the (Wisconsin) reservations," and asked that the government provide them land for a reservation. The commissioner told him to come to his tent later on that evening, but no written record exists detailing what the two discussed.²⁴

Sokaogon oral tradition relates that Mee-gee-see attended further meetings with government officials in which a famous lost treaty was negotiated. (Those events are the

subject of the next chapter.) The Sokaogon have always contended that their claim to their traditional land centering around Mole, Rice, Post, and Pelican Lakes was never altered.²⁵ In 1933 elders who knew these chiefs testified at a meeting with BIA representatives that it was a mistake that the chiefs Big Martin and Mee-gee-see signed under the Lac du Flambeau and Lac Court Oreilles bands.²⁶

The implications of signing under another tribe affected the Sokaogon's identity as a separate and autonomous group of Chippewa. After the 1854 treaty the Sokaogon did not enjoy separate recognition by the federal government until 1934.

CHAPTER 4
THE LOST TREATY

The treaty of 1854 marked a major turning point in the relationship between the Sokaogon and the government. By the end of 1855 continuous pressure by local miners, lumbermen, farmers, and land speculators brought about an increased need to clear the title to all the land ceded in the 1842 and 1854 treaties.¹ Two Wisconsin Chippewa groups, the Sokaogon and St. Croix, who both eventually gained federal recognition under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, did not claim any rights to any of the four Wisconsin reservations created under the 1854 treaty. They refused to relinquish their claim to their traditional lands in northern Wisconsin. The Sokaogon and the St. Croix Chippewa remained on small areas in their traditional lands and eked out a living harvesting wild rice and hunting deer and other small game. The St. Croix, like the Sokaogon Chippewa, continued to demand land for themselves near the upper part of the St. Croix River in western Wisconsin, hoping the federal government would keep its promise and reserve land for them in their traditional territory.²

After the 1854 treaty the Sokaogon found themselves in

the same situation. After Chief Mee-gee-see's meeting with Commissioner Manypenny in September of 1854, numerous records show that a treaty negotiation did take place between the Sokaogon and government agents. Those negotiations produced what has become known as the Sokaogon's "lost treaty." Many stories of the lost treaty have emerged over the last one hundred and fifty years. Historians, government agents, Sokaogon tribal members, and even local non-Indians who, over time, became interested in the plight of the Sokaogon, have generated a variety of interpretations concerning the actual time and specific events of the lost-treaty negotiations.

In his book, The Chippewas of Lake Superior, Chippewa historian Edmund Danziger, Jr., reported that "BIA negotiators promised the Sokaogon a reservation of twelve square-miles of land when they signed a treaty in 1855, however the U.S. Senate's refusal to ratify it left them landless."³ Since the Congressional record makes no reference to the lost treaty, it remains suspect as to whether it found its way back to Washington at all.

In her study of the Lake Superior Chippewa, Sister Carolissa Levi relates that Chief Mee-gee-see was prevented from attending a treaty council at LaPointe and sent Nig-gig, Otter, to observe and report on the negotiations. Although Otter had no authority to negotiate on behalf of the Sokaogon, he signed a treaty which promised the Sokaogon

money, annuities, and land.⁴ A year later, in 1856, Chief Mee-gee-see met with government officials and refused to acknowledge any treaty that Otter had negotiated and signed. He claimed Otter had no authority to bind the Sokaogon to such a treaty. Chief Mee-gee-see and the government agent drew up a map which encompassed an area of approximately twelve square miles. That rectangular area included a number of lakes which provided the Sokaogon with wild rice and other forms of subsistence. Summit, Pelican, Metonga, and Pickerel Lakes formed the boundaries of the twelve square-mile reservation. (See Figure 2) Mee-gee-see was given a copy of the map and the original was sent back to Washington for ratification. However, the boat went down in the Great Lakes on the return trip with everyone aboard.⁵ If Levi's account is accurate, the treaty never made it back to Washington, which contradicts Danziger's version.

In 1983, Denver Post journalist John Farrell produced a similar account of the events surrounding the Sokaogon's lost treaty. Farrell reports that in 1854, due to a badly burned foot, Chief Mee-gee-see was prohibited from attending a treaty negotiation which set aside land for Chippewa reservations. After the chief recovered, he met with government agents and demanded recognition for his group of Chippewa. The agents ignored Chief Mee-gee-see, after which the chief "stripped to the waist and thrust a knife through his arm," which he did not remove for two hours.⁶ A map was

subsequently drawn up which reserved part of their ancestral territory. The map included Post Lake, the Peshtigo swamps, and six lakes near present-day Crandon, Wisconsin. The agent supposedly brought the map to Washington and Chief Mee-gee-see kept a vigil at Fort Howard, present-day Green Bay, for five years, waiting for the agent to return.⁷ However, the agent never did return leaving Mee-gee-see and the Sokaogon Chippewa landless.

Pete McGeshick, Sr., an elder of the Sokaogon Chippewa and long-time resident of Mole Lake, told a similar version of the tale in which Chief Mee-gee-see was promised land in the territory in which the Sokaogon had lived since their chief, Big Martin, negotiated with the government in the early 1800s. According to Mr. McGeshick, the treaty which Mee-gee-see signed, along with the reservation map, was kept by the chief until his death in the late 1850s. Mee-gee-see gave the documents to his son, Wa-bee-she-ba-nase, White Eagle, before he died. When asked if he knew any information concerning whether the boat on which the agent, treaty, and reservation map went down in the Great Lakes on the return trip, or whether they made it back to Washington and were presented to Congress, Mr. McGeshick replied, "I heard both stories, but you would think if those officials in Washington knew about the treaty and map, things would have been different. We might have received more land (than their present reservation)."⁸

In his 1988 study, Wild Rice and the Ojibway People, Smithsonian folklorist Thomas Vennum, Jr.'s, version is that after the 1854 treaty negotiations at LaPointe, the Sokaogon began separate discussions with the federal government and were promised a twelve square-mile reservation near Rice Lake.⁹

In the early 1960s Alice Ackley Randall, great granddaughter of Chief Mee-gee-see and sister to Chief Willard Ackley, who was chief at that time, stated in a personal account that Chief Mee-gee-see was promised a thirty square-mile reservation, but his people never received it. She claimed that in 1855 Mee-gee-see met with Indian agents and told them that his group of Chippewa had not received any land.¹⁰ In a document titled "Sokaogon Chippewa Chiefs Past and Present of Wisconsin," Chief Willard Ackley describes Mee-gee-see's meeting with government officials late in 1854 at L'Anse, Michigan:

"Later Chief Mi-gee-see was able to lead his Band to L'Anse, Michigan, to receive their share of payments due them from funds created by sale and cessions of 1854. It was at this time that Chief Gitshee Mi-gee-see called the government officials attention to the fact that he had no reservation. The officials asked him where he wanted his reservation? He replied by showing them a handful of wild rice, explaining that the territory he referred to had many lakes and streams in which this rice grew wild. He also told them there was a great quantity of timber, fish and game in this territory; besides the wild rice which he held in

⁹Chief Willard Ackley was elected chief in 1934 and served as chief and chairman of the Sokaogon until 1960.

his hand, was the staple food of his people. The officials agreed that this territory was the ideal location for the Sokaogon Chippewa."¹¹

Levi supports Chief Ackley's story that a treaty and map existed which recognized the Sokaogon's claim to the land which surrounded the Post, Pelican, Mole, Summit, and Pickerel Lakes. But the original treaty and map were lost and therefore not ratified by Congress. The Sokaogon, however, supposedly retained a copy for themselves and the fate of that copy is as elusive as the original.¹²

In the fall of 1855, as the Sokaogon made their seasonal move east to the Peshtigo swamps, a trader named William Johnson extended credit to many of the Sokaogon families for the oncoming winter.¹³ William Johnson was a Norwegian trader who first set up a trading business near the Wolf River crossing in northern Wisconsin and later branched out to Johnson Falls. Later he set up a post near the mouth of Rice Lake, a small lake in the heart of traditional Sokaogon territory, and capitalized on the trade with the Sokaogon. Johnson eventually married into the tribe and often acted as their interpreter.¹⁴ He eventually moved his operations into Sokaogon territory. Johnson even went so far as to organize a Chippewa contingent to fight in the Civil War.¹⁵

Due to a harsh winter in 1855-56 the Sokaogon debt to William Johnson was \$1200. The only wealth the Sokaogon possessed was the map and treaty guaranteeing them twelve

square miles of reservation land. Levi contends that "Johnson slipped into the chief's (Mee-gee-see) teepee and requisitioned the map as security for the loan."¹⁶ It was common practice for traders to extend credit to Indian groups knowing that either through treaty or by special payment they would be paid in full by the government. In the treaty of 1842, of which the Sokaogon were a part, the government paid numerous bills submitted by traders and other parties who had extended credit to Indians. For example, that treaty's payment schedule of claims shows that the American Fur Company alone received \$13,365.30. Its owner, John Jacob Astor, was listed as claimant forty-eight and received an additional \$37,994.98. Astor is an extreme example, but many other traders submitted bills which the federal government paid in full after investigating their accuracy.¹⁷ Johnson was no doubt aware of that practice so it is puzzling that he would steal something as valuable as the Sokaogon's copy of the map. If his record of the debt was legitimate, there would have been no reason for him to resort to such a drastic measure. Government policy was to honor all legitimate debt claims submitted for payment, and there were even many instances of fraudulent claims which passed the scrutiny of government accountants.¹⁸

Earle S. Holman, writing a story on early fur traders for the Wolf River Valley Newspaper in the 1960s, offers a different version of how the Sokaogon map found its way into

Johnson's possession. Holman claimed that the map, along with treaty medals, was given to William Johnson for safe keeping.¹⁹ There is no evidence that Johnson was ever paid. However, it is safe to conjecture that he did not receive payment because the map and treaty* were never returned to the Sokaogon.

Sometime after 1872, Johnson gave the map to Henry Strauss, a local businessman, as payment for a debt. Strauss and Johnson set up a rest and mail station near the old Wolf River crossing in the 1850s when they first arrived in Wisconsin. After parting with Johnson in the trading business, Strauss served as Langlade county clerk and began lending out county money to individuals, many of whom failed to repay. Not being able to face the shame of financial failure, Strauss took his own life. According to journalist John Farrell, sometime between 1889 and 1900, Strauss sent the map to Washington to be recorded, but no official record of that action exists. Any trace of the document died with him.²⁰

Johnson and Strauss were not alone in scouting for economic opportunity in northern Wisconsin. Along with them came men like Willard Acley, who in the late 1840s with

*In researching the accounts of the Lost-Treaty negotiations there is a consensus that a map outlining a Sokaogon reservation was drawn in a meeting between Chief Mee-gee-see and a government official. However, while some accounts refer to both a map and a treaty, others make no mention of a treaty.

other loggers, was drawn by the huge white pines which covered northern Wisconsin. Some, like the unconventional Ludwig Motzfeldt and Hi Polar, set up trading businesses and later became involved in local government. Motzfeldt operated trading stores near Swamp Creek and later on the east bank of Pelican Lake. He traded extensively with the Sokaogon. Johnson, Acley, and Polar were formally received into the Sokaogon when each took Indian wives.²¹ Those three individuals realized the importance of gaining Sokaogon confidence.

Not only traders and loggers formed ties with the Sokaogon; the military also came into contact with the Indians. The Military Road was established in 1864, which replaced the old Lake Superior Trail, a fur trade route which serviced traders and loggers operating in northern Wisconsin. The Military Road served Euroamericans travelling from the more settled areas around southern Lake Michigan to northern Wisconsin. Johnson and Strauss's, as well as Motzfeldt's stores, were located on the road.²¹

As the 1850s passed, the Sokaogon remained hopeful that the government's promise, whether by map or treaty or both, would materialize. Not only were the Indians hopeful, but also the Euroamericans who married into the tribe wanted the government to come through with land, money, and other services. The government was providing other Lake Superior Chippewa with those necessities and the Sokaogon wanted

their share. Since there would be lucrative government contracts to supply food, clothes, and other supplies to the Sokaogon, a variety of local Euroamericans wanted the government to recognize the Sokaogon claim and establish a reservation for them. However, the lust for land overshadowed their interests, as well as the Sokaogon's.²²

Chief Mee-gee-see died about 1857 and never saw the fulfillment of the government's promise to create a reservation for the Sokaogon in their traditional land.²³ Sokaogon leadership passed to his son, White Eagle.²⁴ White Eagle's attempts to gain land and federal recognition as a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa also failed. In 1872 he led a small group of the Sokaogon east to Peshtigo, Wisconsin, to receive a payment which consisted of \$1.50 in cash and three yards of calico per person.²⁵ Only about seventy members of the Sokaogon walked the sixty miles to receive that payment. Parents received their children's shares. The Sokaogon received a total of \$348.00 and 669 yards of calico.²⁶ Sokaogon elder Alice Ackley Randall reported that William Johnson also had a payment at his trading post near Rice Lake in 1854, but, much like the 1872 payment, it was only a small amount of cash and cloth.²⁷

It seems apparent that the Sokaogon had some contact with the federal government after losing separate recognition as an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa. The payments which the tribe received and the meetings with

Sokaogon leaders demonstrate that they were far from being a "lost tribe."

While the Sokaogon were in the process of losing their identity as a separate group, other Lake Superior Chippewa were enjoying economic support from the government. By the treaty of 1854 at LaPointe, four reservations were created in Wisconsin, along with two in Michigan, and three in Minnesota.²⁸ The Lake Superior Chippewa who lived near LaPointe received a reservation consisting of nearly five townships. That group is known today as the Bad River Chippewa.²⁹ The Red Cliff Reservation was another Wisconsin reservation, originally called the Buffalo Agency in honor of their chief, Buffalo. The name was changed after the Red Cliff Lumber Company established itself on the reservation in 1897.³⁰

Two other reservations were established by the treaty. The Lac Court Oreilles, or short ears, group made their home in Sawyer County in northern Wisconsin. Their reservation encompassed approximately four townships. The Lac du Flambeau received a reservation similar in size to that of the Lac Court Oreilles which was located just east in north-central Wisconsin.³¹ Those two groups made up the largest Lake Superior Chippewa communities in Wisconsin. Around 1854 the Lac Court Oreilles numbered about 1,012, while the Lac du Flambeau had about 747 members.³² William Warren estimated that there were about 2,000 Lake Superior Chippewa

living in Wisconsin in the mid-1800s, including about 200 Pelican Lake (Sokaogon) Chippewa.³³

Five Lake Superior Chippewa groups, each of whom lived outside Wisconsin, were recognized as separate and autonomous groups and received land for their reservations. The L'Anse and Lac Vieux Desert were given land surrounding Keweenaw Bay, Michigan, while the small Ontonagon Chippewa received a small amount of land on the Lake Superior shore of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In Minnesota the Fond Du Lac, Grand Portage, and Bois Forte Chippewa received reservations among the northern lakes of Minnesota.³⁴

Between 1858 and 1863 the Lake Superior Chippewa groups in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota moved onto their reservations. Each reservation, by the terms of the 1854 and subsequent treaties, was furnished with agricultural equipment, tools and other labor devices, as well as Euroamerican blacksmiths and teachers. Many frame houses were also erected on the reservations to replace traditional wigwams, or birch bark lodges. The government even went so far as to supply many of the individual families with cooking stoves and some furniture.³⁵

The Sokaogon, were not so fortunate, as they continued to live in the vicinity of Post, Mole, Rice, Pelican, Summit, Pickerel and Metonga Lakes, harvesting wild rice and following the deer herds east to the Peshtigo swamps. By 1860 it was apparent that government officials were not

going to recognize the Sokaogon's claim to their traditional land and the push to link them with either the Lac Court Oreilles or the Lac du Flambeau groups began. The government eventually deeded most of the Sokaogon's traditional land to the Northwest Railway Company as a land grant in the 1860s.³⁶

Although legal title was transferred by the government, the Sokaogon claimed that their title was never extinguished. Despite pressure from government agents and local private and public agencies, the Sokaogon remained on a small portion of their traditional land, refusing to be subsumed under the larger Lac Court Oreilles or Lac du Flambeau groups.³⁷ In 1895 an Indian agent named G. L. Scott from the Ashland Agency offered Chief White Eagle and the Sokaogon a small reservation, consisting of forty acres surrounding Rice Lake, and a much larger tract north of that lake. However, through his interpreter, John Hardhead, Chief White Eagle refused the offer. He stated that he wanted the same amount of land that had been promised to his father, Chief Mee-gee-see in 1855. Agent Scott even took White Eagle to Baker's store in nearby Crandon and bought him a new set of clothes to entice the chief to accept the land near Rice Lake, but Chief White Eagle still refused. The agent told the chief that he would take his offer back to Washington, but nothing materialized from that promise.³⁸

The government's sixty-year effort either to persuade the Sokaogon to accept enrollment on the other established

reservations or to settle for a much smaller piece of land than their original twelve square-mile reservation failed. From 1860 to 1910, while still living in their traditional territory around Post and Rice Lakes, the Sokaogon continued to claim their right to separate recognition and also to the twelve square miles of the traditional territory which was promised to Chief Mee-gee-see in 1855.

As the years passed, sympathy for the Sokaogon Chippewa increased as more white settlers came into contact with them and realized that the tribe had always lived in the area and were now destitute and living in extreme poverty. Ever since the area's first white settler, Willard Acly or Ackley, paddled up the Eau Claire River in 1847, the Sokaogon and their white neighbors had enjoyed friendly relations with each other. Like many other whites after him, Ackley married into the Sokaogon Chippewa. He became Chief Mee-gee-see's son-in-law when he married the chief's daughter, Ma-dwa-ji-was-no-qua or Maid of the Forest.³⁹

As mentioned earlier, the trader William Johnson also married into the tribe and became an important character, often acting as an interpreter for the Sokaogon. Although Johnson may have helped the Sokaogon in a number of ways (e.g. acting as interpreter, extending credit, and advocating their claim for land and recognition), his actions were also motivated by greed. Realizing he could make a profit by selling supplies to the Sokaogon, either through

credit or trade, through government contracts of food and other necessities, Johnson was more than eager to expand his relationship with the Sokaogon. He knew that if he became the sole Sokaogon intermediary he would benefit.⁴⁰

William Johnson's varying reputation is as puzzling as the stories of the lost treaty negotiations. Some reports characterize him as friend and helpful agent of the Sokaogon, while others depict him as a greedy fortune-hunter who destroyed the one chance the Indians had to prove their claim. Johnson was also known for his drinking. Sokaogon Chief Justice Fred Ackley related a story of how Johnson swore off drinking after missing a meeting during one particular set of treaty negotiations on Madeline Island. The embarrassing situation even forced Johnson to write a letter of apology to the government officials.⁴¹

Historically, the mid-1850s had a permanent effect on the Sokaogon. During that period they were stigmatized with the lost tribe designation and they also lost their status as a separate and autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa. More importantly, the Sokaogon lost their traditional land, which they had managed and controlled after the Chippewa dispersal from Madeline Island in the late sixteenth century.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Euroamericans intensified their timber harvesting, mining, and land speculating efforts. Indian populations were seen as

obstacles, who were initially targeted for removal. With the failure of the Wisconsin Chippewa removal policy, the government's efforts turned toward reducing Indian land claims. They accomplished this through additional treaties with individual tribes or by consolidating their populations with little regard for traditional political structure. The latter is what characterizes the Sokaogon story. Because their population was not as large as other groups like the Lac du Flambeau or Lac Court Oreille, and because they lived on the southernmost fringe of Lake Superior Chippewa territory, the government found it convenient to group them with those larger groups. After all, that effort opened up an area encompassing some 2000 square miles.

Although relationships with local whites were congenial, the Sokaogon continued to struggle with their problems of lack of land and lack of separate tribal recognition. By 1900 the federal government still refused to recognize the Sokaogon as an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa.

CHAPTER 5

FROM LOST TRIBE TO RECOGNITION

At the start of the twentieth century the federal government began to investigate the Sokaogon claim that they were not a branch of the Lac Court Oreilles or Lac du Flambeau groups. Beginning around 1897, letters from local Indian agents and private citizens aroused the attention of the Indian bureau. The investigations and lobbying begun in 1897 eventually resulted in separate tribal recognition and a reservation under the Indian Reorganization Act.

In 1897 Samuel Shaw initiated a sincere effort to gain economic aid and a permanent homeland for the Sokaogon.¹ Shaw originally came to the United States in 1842 from Scotland and moved to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, ten years later.² He eventually settled in Crandon in 1883, eight miles north of the Sokaogon settlements near Rice and Mole Lakes, a couple of years after the town took its present name in honor of Major Frank P. Crandon. Major Crandon was an official of the Chicago and North West Railway, which owned nearly half of the land in Forest County. Crandon was first called Ayr after a town in Scotland, and Shaw, being from Scotland, may have been attracted to the area by old

acquaintances.³

Samuel Shaw was also one of the first land agents in the area. He worked for the Chicago and North West Railway and advertised land for sale at fifty cents to three dollars per acre in his newspaper, Forest Leaves. He also served as superintendent of schools in Crandon and was influential in getting the legislature to create Forest County. His wife was Crandon's first postmaster. Later Shaw became an attorney and worked as district attorney in Crandon.⁴ Both Shaw and his wife labored on behalf of the Sokaogon to try to persuade Washington and local Indian agents to investigate the tribe's claim that they were an autonomous group of Lake Superior Chippewa deserving of a homeland near Mole, Post, and Rice Lakes.

While serving as district attorney at Crandon in 1897, Shaw wrote a letter to the Secretary of Interior and in which he estimated the Sokaogon's population at one hundred and seventy. He stated that their chief White Eagle, (son of Mee-gee-see), came to see him and asked that someone, preferably Shaw, write to Washington to find out if there was any money to aid his people.⁵ At that time the Sokaogon were finding it very hard to find enough to eat. Many still lived in the traditional bark wigwams and hunted and harvested wild rice for most of their food.⁶

In response to Shaw's inquiry, the bureau sent agent G. L. Scott, from the LaPointe Agency in northern Wisconsin,

to investigate the Sokaogon's condition. Agent Scott estimated the Indian's population between one hundred fifty and two hundred. He reported that the Indians claimed to have always lived in the area and to have received only one government payment in 1872 at Peshtigo. He examined a receipt roll, a list of individuals paid at Peshtigo, and copied the names in an effort to find out how many families and individual Indians still lived in the area.⁷

Later in November of that same year, Agent Scott sent additional correspondence to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and stated, "The status of this band of Chippewa, as near as I can ascertain, is that they have never lived on a reservation; but the majority of them have always lived in Forest County, Wisconsin, near Rice Lake." He recommended that funds be made available so that he could provide them with food and other necessities for the oncoming winter.⁸

Later in February 1899, Mr. Shaw corresponded with Major S. W. Campbell and stated that the Sokaogon chief, White Eagle, presented a petition from the Indians, along with a copy of a treaty, which contained the account of the lost treaty, a promised reservation, and other claims from treaties prior to 1855. Shaw wrote:

"This treaty gives a clue to these poor people that ought to help them out at Washington. The Interior Department, must have the original there, and Megesee's signature as second chief values him and his people a party to the pledged beliefs by the government, not only as to the annuities, but also to the stipulated reservation. The

people have certainly not had what was contracted for to them in that treaty, a treaty that gave to our government the princely inheritance of most of northern Wisconsin and Michigan with wealth in forests and minerals that cannot be properly estimated by this generation."⁹

This was apparently a reference to the famous "lost treaty" which Chief Mee-gee-see negotiated in 1855. However, if true, why did the chief of the Sokaogon sign as a secondary chief? The Sokaogon petition to which Shaw referred claimed that Mee-gee-see negotiated and signed a treaty which promised the Indians a twelve-square mile reservation surrounding Rice, Post, and Mole Lakes.¹⁰ The treaty which Shaw referred to in his letter to Agent Campbell could not have been the lost treaty. In 1854 Chief Mee-gee-see signed a treaty at LaPointe as a secondary chief, but he signed as a member of the Lac du Flambeau group.¹¹ Shaw must have viewed a copy of the 1854 treaty and somehow mistakenly thought it was a copy of the "lost treaty."

In March of 1899, Agent Campbell wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington to report that he had just returned from a visit with the Sokaogon Chippewa; he referred to them as the Rice Lake Band of Chippewa. Agent Campbell distributed three hundred dollars in food and other supplies, and asserted, because of the lack of documents, it was impossible to ascertain what claims the Sokaogon had against the government. He wrote that he would be working closely with Samuel Shaw in dealing with the

Sokaogon.¹²

On April 25, 1899, Shaw again corresponded with Agent Campbell and reported his success in getting a Sokaogon council to meet and explain their claim. Chief White Eagle retold the story of the lost treaty and reservation. However, the chief gave a detailed description of the boundaries of the promised land, complete with township, range, and section numbers. Shaw was so surprised by the chief's account that he wrote, "The chief tells this with many circumstances, which convinces me that there must be some truth in his position."¹³ The Sokaogon did not want to be removed to any other reservation and would not agree to any land other than that in the Post, Rice, and Mole Lake area. Shaw also took a census and reported that the group numbered about four hundred.¹⁴

In preparation for the winter of 1899-90, Agent Campbell furnished the Sokaogon with mackinaws, heavy trousers, socks, mittens, underwear, and stockings. The Breakstone Store in Crandon got the bid to furnish those items which helped the Indians get through another harsh Wisconsin winter.¹⁵ Agent S. W. Campbell visited the Sokaogon off and on during the winter and the next spring. During that time the chieftainship passed to Wan-bash, John Seymour. After his contacts with the Sokaogon, in early 1900 Agent Campbell reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that there was no doubt that the Sokaogon were once

part of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Chippewa, who had refused to be removed to that reservation. The agent also stated that the Lac du Flambeau Indians would not allow the Sokaogon to seek a permanent home on their reservation.¹⁶

After receiving Agent Campbell's report, Commissioner of Indian Affairs W. A. Jones responded with increased interest in acquiring land for the Sokaogon. Commissioner Jones instructed Campbell to investigate and ascertain exactly where the Indians lived in order to find some suitable land in their vicinity. If Campbell could not find any vacant land, the Commissioner thought it practicable to buy five or six hundred acres of improved or partially improved land which could be allotted to each family head.¹⁷

Agent Campbell wrote back to the Commissioner two months later describing his subsequent activities with the Sokaogon. In a council meeting with Campbell, the Sokaogon told him that some fifty or sixty Sokaogon families lived in the area around Rice Lake, but another two or three hundred more families were scattered over northeastern Wisconsin. Again, the Indians retold the story of the lost treaty and the reservation which was promised to Mee-gee-see in 1855. At this meeting, though, the Sokaogon claimed that the total acreage was five or six townships. Agent Campbell reported that the Indians would not settle for less than a township and a half. Campbell persisted in getting the Sokaogon to drop section after section until they agreed on two sections

and three lots, approximately 1400 acres.¹⁸ Campbell writes, "I tried every way to induce them to be satisfied with one section but I could not prevail upon them to consent to one acre less."¹⁹ The Sokaogon agreed to the acreage because it encompassed areas where many families lived and also assured them access to the rice beds on Rice Lake. In return, the Sokaogon agreed to patronize a day school, if one was built, clear land and cultivate it, and build houses which would replace their traditional bark wigwams.²⁰

For the next couple of years, while Washington decided the fate of the Sokaogon, Agent Campbell continued to keep informed of the Indians' situation. During those years when he began to keep records on the Sokaogon, Campbell tried to figure out the exact number of Sokaogon Chippewa. His first census in 1898 totaled 206; in 1899 he recorded 191; in 1901, 189; and in 1902 he counted 175 Indians living in the Rice Lake area.²¹ In 1906 Campbell called the Sokaogon family heads to Crandon and at Vine's Hardware Store he paid them \$5.74 each. A total of 300 people were paid. For the next four years, the Sokaogon received rations of food and other necessities.²² Agent Campbell's attempt to produce an exact record of the number of Sokaogon was not successful because many Sokaogon lived only seasonally in the Rice Lake vicinity. Only the incentive of cash, food, or other annuities could bring together most of the Sokaogon families so that an accurate census could be made.

Agent Campbell's and Samuel Shaw's efforts to bring to light the condition of the Sokaogon at the turn of the century forced the bureau to determine the actual legal status of the group. Bureau officials set about to determine whether the Sokaogon were indeed a separate band of Lake Superior Chippewa or were absentee members of some other band, who as individuals may or may not have severed their tribal ties with other Lake Superior Chippewa.

Beginning in 1919 and concluding in 1930, the bureau sent out five different investigators for the express purpose of determining whether the Sokaogon constituted a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa. Nathan Margold, Solicitor General for the BIA, assessed those investigations in his memorandum to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1937.

Inspector Coleman reported in November 1919 that the Sokaogon were a separate group of the Lake Superior Chippewa. He stated that the Indians were known by three names: Mole Lake Band, Rice Lake Band, and Post Lake Band. He estimated their population at one hundred fifty and reported that none of them had ever been enrolled with any other band or been allotted land on any of the Lake Superior Chippewa reservations. Coleman strongly recommended that the government purchase land for the Indians because of their critical condition.²³

The next investigator of the Sokaogon was Superintendent Bennett from the Potawatomi Reservation. Since the

Potawatomi reservation was the closest agency to where the Sokaogon were living, Bennett assumed authority over the Sokaogon. Bennett met practically all of the Sokaogon who lived permanently in the Rice Lake area and also visited the Lake Superior Chippewa at Lac Vieux Desert, L'Anse, Lac du Flambeau, and LaPointe to review the rolls of those bands. Bennett interviewed many old Indians from each area. On November 9, 1920, he reported that the Indians had lived in the Mole Lake (Rice Lake) area long before the 1854 treaty and at that time they claimed to be a separate band who were recognized as such by other Lake Superior Chippewa. His report included verbatim testimony from twenty-five Indians who were over seventy years old. Bennett concluded from the testimony of those Indians that the Sokaogon were a separate band independent from other Lake Superior Chippewa.²⁴

Despite those two reports, the bureau wished further information and sent out a third investigator, H. M. Creel, to gather more evidence. Creel submitted his report on May 12, 1922, which concluded that the Sokaogon's present location, near Rice Lake, had been their traditional territory for many generations. He interviewed both Lac du Flambeau and Sokaogon Indians and many of them testified that it was a mistake that the Sokaogon chiefs signed as members of the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa in 1854. Creel filed a second report and stated that the oldest and most reliable members of the bands at L'Anse, Bad River, and Lac du Flambeau

Reservations agreed that the Sokaogon were and continued to be a separate band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Creel personally shared the same opinion.²⁵

Later in the summer of 1922, Superintendent James W. Balmer of the Lac du Flambeau made an investigation of the Sokaogon. Balmer was interested in the Sokaogon because if the Indians did not get any land for a separate reservation, the bureau would probably try to locate them on his agency. Balmer filed his report on July 27, 1922, and stressed the credibility of witnesses from Lac du Flambeau, L'Anse, and Rice Lake. Balmer found that some Sokaogon were in fact on the Lac du Flambeau rolls, but concluded that they were placed there by mistake and should be taken off and listed with the Sokaogon as a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa.²⁶

Nevertheless, the conclusion of the four investigators and the recognition of Sokaogon autonomy by other Chippewa bands did not satisfy the bureau. It was apparent that the Sokaogon needed much more assistance from the government, but the bureau still felt that the Sokaogon could be absentee members of the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa.

In 1930 the bureau sent out what was to be their last investigator of this matter. Agent Wooster filed his report and concluded that the Sokaogon were not a separate band, but absentee members of the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa. Wooster did not take any testimony of older Indians

interviewed by the previous investigators. He based his conclusion almost entirely on the testimony of two L'Anse Chippewa, who claimed that some Sokaogon received treaty payments at the Lac du Flambeau Agency and on the fact that two Sokaogon chiefs signed the 1854 treaty with the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa. He argued that after the Sokaogon chiefs signed that treaty, they and their followers became members of the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa.²⁷

While the government tried to determine the status of the Sokaogon, the Indians continued to live near Post, Rice, and Mole Lakes. Many different government officials visited the Sokaogon during the first quarter of the twentieth century. During that time period, the Sokaogon continued to recognize their own chiefs, many of whom met with the different government officials. When Agent Coleman visited the Sokaogon in 1919, the Indians recognized John Seymour as their chief. Seymour, known to his people as Wam-bash, served in that capacity until 1920, when Edward Ackley, Me-sa-be, became chief. Ackley was the adopted son of Willard L. Ackley, the area's first white settler, and Ma-dwa-ji-wan-no-quay, Maid of the Forest. Mrs. Ackley was the daughter of Chief Mee-gee-see and married Mr. Ackley in the mid-1850s. Willard Ackley was born in England in 1818 and immigrated to the United States in the 1840s. He arrived in Wisconsin in 1847 and worked as a logger, trader, and businessman.²⁸

Edward Ackley died in 1927 at Lac Vieux Desert in Michigan's upper peninsula. After his death, the Sokaogon chieftainship passed to his brother DeWitt Ackley, Ge-ga-kay-yoshi. Since DeWitt was in poor health he decided he could no longer function as the group's chief and relinquished his title. The Sokaogon then recognized DeWitt's oldest son, Willard LeRoy Ackley, Ga-bay-is-gon, as chief.²⁹ (See Appendix B for list of Sokaogon chiefs.)

In the meantime, in 1929 at Odanah, Wisconsin, the Lake Superior Chippewa groups from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan met in a general council to discuss tribal relations between each other and relations with the U. S. government. At that council meeting, those Lake Superior groups voted to recognize Willard LeRoy Ackley as chief of the Sokaogon band.³⁰ That action, for the first time in many years, formally recognized the Sokaogon as a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa.

Despite the conclusion of four bureau investigations and recognition by other Chippewa, the government remained reluctant to acknowledge the Sokaogon and honor their claims to retaining a home in the vicinity of Rice, Post, and Mole Lakes. However, in the 1930s the government's Indian policy took a more sympathetic attitude toward Indians and their claims against the government. Under Roosevelt's administration, the bureau instituted a plan to reorganize Indian reservations and their traditional governments. John

collier led this crusade to help tribes retain their traditional cultures and also organize themselves into business-like corporations which promoted self-determination. That policy was put into law in 1934 through the Indian Reorganization Act.³⁰

That change in federal Indian policy finally enabled the Sokaogon to gain federal recognition and also to obtain a small reservation in the vicinity of their traditional homeland. On December 29, 1934, Chief Willard Leroy Ackley and some of his people were called to Ashland, Wisconsin, to discuss the IRA. They met and talked with Commissioner John Collier and told him of their past history, their lost treaty, the promised reservation, hardships, etc. Collier asked Chief Ackley where he desired a reservation. The chief insisted on a location near Rice Lake, stressing that there were six wild rice lakes in that general area and that wild rice was the Sokaogon's main food staple and had been for many generations. Collier agreed to purchase land in that area.³¹

In 1936, the bureau began holding meetings with the Sokaogon to determine how and when they would become a federally recognized group of Lake Superior Chippewa and also to determine the location and size of their reservation. At one meeting Sokaogon elders formed a committee to represent the Indians in their relations with the government and to hire attorneys on their behalf.³² The Sokaogon also

voted to accept the IRA and organize under it. In a letter to Commissioner Collier, Chief Ackley stated that his group of Indians wished to be called the "Sakaoggon [sic] Chippewa Indian Community." The bureau accepted their request to organize and their name. By 1939 land was purchased and the tribe adopted a constitution and by-laws. A reservation of approximately 1,800 acres, far less than the twelve square-mile reservation claim, was carved out of private, state, and federal land near Rice and Mole Lakes.³³

After a long struggle, the tribe at last received recognition from the federal government, which meant that they would receive land in their traditional territory and more financial assistance. Nevertheless, the tribe remained destitute. Funds for tribal housing were approved as was other general welfare assistance, but the tribe continued to press their claim for the land which was promised in the lost treaty.

CHAPTER 6

LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Although the Sokaogon gained federal recognition at the end of the 1930s, little changed in their daily lives. Families still subsisted on seasonal foods such as wild rice, berries, wild game and fish. Despite the construction of eighteen modern homes in 1936-37 under the WPA, a few families continued to live in traditional bark wigwams. The Sokaogon continued to make frequent visits to Lac Vieux Desert, Bad River, and other Chippewa reservations, keeping in tradition with previous generations.¹ The depression came and went and Sokaogon families experienced very little social or economic change, although their political status changed greatly.

The tribe voted to accept the Indian Reorganization Act and in 1938 their constitution was approved by the federal government. In 1939 the federal government bought 1,680 acres of scattered parcels of public and private land near Rice Lake creating the Mole Lake Reservation, one of the smallest in the state. That land purchase was in accordance with Section 5 of the IRA.² The land lacked the size and resources necessary for development of industry or

recreation. Like the majority of reservations, the federal government provided all economic, health, and educational assistance to Sokaogon tribal members. Very few jobs existed for the Sokaogon and if jobs did exist, the Indians lacked the required skills.

Since they now had legal title to a small portion of their traditional land, Indian agents discouraged Sokaogon visits to other Chippewa reservations, as well as off-reservation wild rice harvesting and fishing. Nevertheless, Sokaogon families continued to survive on their traditional wild rice harvests supplemented by occasional hunting and fishing and government assistance.³ In 1939 twenty-three families resided on the reservation with an average annual income of \$450.59. No opportunity for any type of agriculture existed, since eighty per cent of the reservation remained uncleared.⁴

Gaining federal recognition and acquiring a small but nonetheless bona fide land base brought the Sokaogon into the twentieth century. Over one hundred and fifty years had passed since the federal government recognized the Sokaogon as an autonomous group. Recognition did not fulfill their expectations.

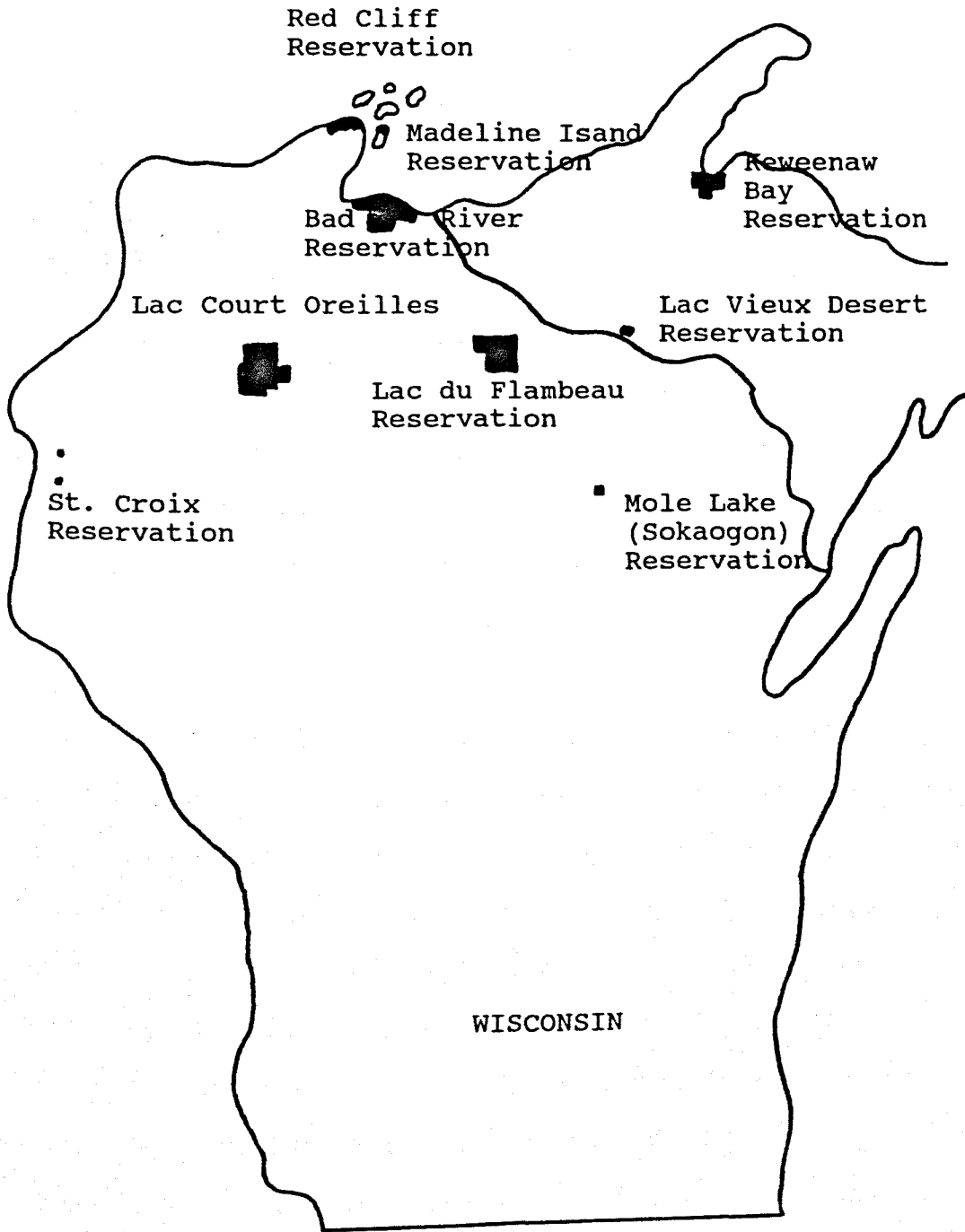
The Sokaogon had no choice but to join the hundreds of other tribes who shared a trust relationship with the federal government. Like other Indian tribes, the Sokaogon were wards of the government. Federal recognition did not

automatically mean that the government accepted the tribe's claim to the twelve square-mile reservation stipulated in the lost treaty of 1854-55. The question of the Sokaogon's relationship to other Lake Superior Chippewa also remained unresolved in government eyes. Were they a splinter group of the Lac du Flambeau, Lac Court Oreilles or Bad River groups? The Bureau of Indian Affairs conducted five separate ethnographic investigations on that question; four of the five investigators agreed they were indeed an autonomous Lake Superior Chippewa group, yet the Bureau of Indian Affairs persisted in identifying them as a splinter group of other bands.⁵

By 1940, like thousands of other tribes in dozens of states, the Sokaogon were the target of the BIA's acculturation program. In theory the Sokaogon retained ownership of a small portion of their traditional land, but in reality the BIA administered all realty business. The Sokaogon were fortunate, however, because their land base was still one undisturbed piece, unlike other reservations which were checker-boarded with individual Indian allotments, land held communally (tribal land), and private land owned by non-Indians. (See FIGURE 3)

Although the Sokaogon escaped the allotment process instituted by the Dawes Act of 1887, they did not fare as well as they had anticipated with the Indian Reorganization Act. At that time the IRA seemed the Sokaogon's best

FIGURE 3 LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA RESERVATIONS



choice, and really the only option if they were to survive as a distinct community of Lake Superior Chippewa.⁶ The tribe readily accepted the IRA, thinking economic prosperity would soon follow. They had no idea that a tribal government organized under the IRA meant the end of their traditional chieftainship and decision-making.

After gaining federal recognition, a chairman and tribal council, elected by enrolled tribal members, made all political decisions. That was very different from a traditional council meeting in which elders and recognized chiefs pondered social, political, and economic questions. After 1934, however, elections, business matters, BIA directives, and federal programs filled political Sokaogon life.⁷

The Sokaogon were late starters in the federal government's game of shifting Indian policy. Although they caught up quickly, in less than one generation, they went on to experience the frustrations of dealing with bureaucracy first hand while working hard to make the reservation a better place to live. One individual who demonstrated a lifetime of service to the Sokaogon community was long time chairman and the last traditional chief Willard L. Ackley. Chief Ackley* was instrumental in obtaining government recognition as well as securing land for the reservation.

*The term chief is used out of respect for Mr. Ackley.

In the late 1930s he met with John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1932-41, at the Ashland Agency in northern Wisconsin and had discussed the tribe's history, their claim to their traditional land, and their increasing need for a place to live permanently. There were countless times when Chief Ackley provided personal services (i.e. providing transportation, giving money, writing letters, etc.) to his people that went beyond the description of chairman of the Sokaogon tribal council. Chief Ackley was elected chairman in 1939 and served until 1968.⁸

With the help of people like Chief Ackley and other Sokaogon council members, the tribe experienced improvement in health care, primary and secondary education, housing, and overall social conditions. Dozens of government subsidized homes were built, a day school was established, and food programs were instituted. Although no industry existed on the reservation, Sokaogon families benefitted from government aid and programs. The commodity food program, Head Start, and many other services provided a new experience for Sokaogon families. Gaining some material wealth became a reality for the community; modern homes and automobiles, television, home furnishings, etc., each had an altering affect on the Sokaogon.

In 1940 the Sokaogon, along with six other Lake Superior Chippewa tribes, filed suit before the Indian Claims Commission against the federal government for treaty

violations, illegal harvesting of timber on reservation lands, contract violations, and non-payment of treaty considerations. The Commission ruled that the Sokaogon and the other Lake Superior Chippewa could not sustain any of their claims and dismissed their case.⁹ That ruling seemed to settle some of the Sokaogon legal claims, but their historical claim for a twelve square-mile reservation based on the lost treaty still endured, at least in the minds of the Sokaogon. That controversy would surface again some fifty years later.

Despite losing their initial claim to the land described in the lost treaty, the Sokaogon did experience a small but noticeable improvement in their standard of living in the twentieth century. Euroamerican education was particularly a new experience. Before 1950 many teenage Sokaogon simply did not attend high school in nearby Crandon, though most of the children attended elementary school. Those teens who did attend high school chose the government's boarding school system, and many resided at Flandreau, South Dakota. During the second half of the nineteenth century when Euroamerican schools were being established throughout northern Wisconsin, the Sokaogon simply did not attend public schools, although a few were educated by missionaries. Long time Sokaogon resident, elder, council woman, and Flandreau graduate Myra McGeshick Pitts related a story of when she went to boarding school at

Flandreau in the late 1940s:

"I left Mole Lake to go to school in Flandreau because there was nothing here at that time. There was nothing going on, no industry, the only exciting time was hunting season, when people would come up here from all over the state."¹⁰

Her brother Fred McGeshick, Sr., who attended Flandreau during the same period as Mrs. Pitts, claimed his education at Flandreau was mainly vocational. "I learned how to lay bricks, but also math, reading and science, though the last couple of years was mainly laying bricks."¹¹

Today Sokaogon children and teens attend the public schools in Crandon, eight miles north of the reservation. In the past there were very few Sokaogon who pursued higher education, although that is changing. Currently the Sokaogon tribe provides federally subsidized financial assistance to twelve undergraduate and vocational students and two graduate students pursuing degrees in education, nursing, and engineering.¹²

For those Sokaogon born after 1930, life seemed to improve from the turn of the century life-styles of hunting and harvesting wild rice for subsistence. The paternalism of the federal government first provided recognition, then land acquisition, and finally federal assistance through education, housing, health care, and food programs. Despite that assistance, however, the Sokaogon remained a poor people. The only opportunities for young Sokaogon Chippewa were either boarding school or the armed services. Fred

McGeshick, Sr. described how economic constraints governed his choices:

"A lot of those Indians who went back to the reservation to live didn't do nothing. They lived off what the government gave to the tribe through different welfare programs. I didn't go back because I had a trade and I couldn't put it to use back there [Mole Lake Reservation]. I also was just married and was starting a family. I moved to Montana, that's where Joyce [his wife] was from and there seemed better chances for bricklaying jobs here [Montana], but I had to travel a lot."¹³

According to Chippewa historian Edmund Danziger, "Sokaogon life was typical of the overall Lake Superior Chippewa experience: no regular and substantial cash income from industrial employment, no economic expansion reminiscent of the logging boom, no bank accounts."

Danziger also claimed that there was little improvement of living conditions among the Lake Superior Chippewa, Sokaogon included.¹⁴ That holds true for the tribes such as Lac du Flambeau, Lac Court Oreilles, and other groups who had been recognized since the 1850s. Those tribes became experienced wards of the government, but their initial boost in livelihood was four generations past. They became accustomed to substandard housing, but in the Sokaogon experience, modern housing of any quality was an improvement over bark wigwams.

In August of 1953 Congress instituted a fundamental change in federal Indian policy, one much different from the twenty-year rule of the IRA, and the approach of John Collier and New Deal's sympathetic policies toward Indian

tribes. House Concurrent Resolution 108 was the government's attempt to terminate the special relationship it had with Indian tribes as rapidly as possible.¹⁵ Though the Sokaogon were not targeted for termination*, only two weeks later another piece of legislation, Public Law 280, affected their newly acquired status as a federally recognized Indian tribe. That law allowed the state of Wisconsin to assume complete criminal and certain areas of civil jurisdiction over the tribe, undermining the Sokaogon's authority to govern their internal affairs.¹⁶ Only twelve years after a many generation long struggle for recognition of Sokaogon autonomy, the government changed its mind. That drastic shift in policy confused the Sokaogon, as well as hundreds of the other tribes.

By the 1960s, the termination threat had quieted and the Sokaogon adjusted to state jurisdiction. At that time a new federal policy emerged out of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations which continued through 1980. Self-determination for Indian tribes became the government's policy which brought about an increase federal aid. Once again the Sokaogon, like hundreds of other tribes, began to

*The government only targeted a few specific Indian tribes; all the Indians in the states of California, Florida, New York, and Texas were targeted because of their large white populations. Larger tribes such as the Klamath, Flathead, Potawatomi, and Menomine were also targeted after a study of their "readiness" to measure whether their termination would be successful, after which the termination of more tribes would follow.

experience the government's paternalism. In 1975 there were one hundred and forty-eight Sokaogon living on the reservation, which had a forty-one per cent unemployment rate.¹⁷ Along with assistance from government programs and services, the Sokaogon as well as other Lake Superior Chippewa, continued to supplement their diets and livelihood through hunting, fishing, trapping, and the consumption and sale of wild rice.¹⁸

Toward the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s, the Sokaogon became involved in the general struggle of Lake Superior Chippewa over treaty rights, especially off-reservation hunting, fishing, and wild rice harvesting. Lake Superior Indians began to exercise certain rights guaranteed in past treaties after the Supreme Court in the Boldt Decision* upheld the right of tribes to fish off reservations. In the early 1980s tribes around the Great Lake followed suit and began to exercise their treaty rights, which led to the famous Voight Decision. On January 25, 1983, the United States Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit reserved and protected, by a series of past treaties, Lake Superior Chippewa hunting, fishing, and wild rice harvesting rights off reservations.¹⁹ The Sokaogon,

*The Boldt Decision resulted from the case of the U. S. vs Washington in which the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower and appellate courts on the illegality of the state's re when applied to Indians exercising off-reservation treaty rights.

along with other Lake Superior Chippewa, could now fish, hunt, and harvest wild rice on certain lands from which they had been banned for the past one hundred and thirty years.

Off-reservation fishing was the most controversial issue, not because of the amount harvested, but because of the method used. The Sokaogon and other Lake Superior Chippewa used the traditional method, night spearing. Traditionally the Indians would spear spawning walleye and muskee from torch-lit canoes. Today they continue to use the same method, but now with the assistance of modern spot lights and spears.²⁰ Although the annual harvest by Lake Superior Chippewa spearfishers is significantly lower than that of state-wide anglers, (1990 anglers harvested 224,000 walleye, while the spear harvest was 25,348 walleye), the method and time of harvest, which is during spawning, seems to cause many of the negative sentiments toward Indians and the rights they claim and exercise under past treaties.²¹ Sokaogon spearfishers and rice harvesters are continually harassed when they engage in those activities. State protesters shout names and carry signs such as "No Timber Niggers," "Save A Walleye, Spear an Indian," and dozens of other anti-Indian slogans and remarks.²² That battle, though settled in the courts, continues during every fishing and rice-harvesting season on countless lakes throughout northern Wisconsin.

During the late 1970s and the 1980s, the Sokaogon

economy was basically dependent on the seasonal harvesting of wild rice and on tourism. The wild rice season had changed little from past generations, only now it provided cash rather than being a primary source of subsistence. Tourism emerged out of a new and exciting bluegrass music festival. Starting in 1975, the beginning of each August started a four-day festival of music, dance, and celebration on the reservation. Sokaogon members found jobs in security or sold concessions on the festival grounds. Big-name performers drew crowds numbering in the thousands. One year in the mid-1980s over thirty-thousand people attended the festival. Named the Great Northern Bluegrass Festival, the annual event has provided a small but needed boost in the Sokaogon economy for the past eighteen years, but has recently been overshadowed by on-reservation gambling.²³

Currently, the Sokaogon tribal economy, like so many other tribal economies, revolves around gambling. The Sokaogon began their initial involvement in Indian gaming through big bucks bingo. They soon realized the economic potential of Indian gaming and branched out into developing a thriving casino operation. Today the Sokaogon operate two casinos on the reservation. Under the auspices of the National Indian Gaming Commission and following the guidelines of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, the Sokaogon casinos operate seven days a week and employ two hundred workers, half of whom are tribal members.²⁴

The tribe is currently planning to expand their operations to include a new bluegrass resort/casino. The two phase project will eventually include a hotel which will house a casino, a nightclub, and restaurant and, then will eventually expand to a bluegrass festival grounds and an eighteen-hole golf course.²⁵

The tribe's future seems caught in a never ending struggle for survival. Although their economic future seems latched to Indian gaming through bingo and casino operations, their social outlook seems bright. Many Sokaogon who are coming of age in the nineties are set on making life on the reservation better. Traditions are being revived and tribal members are becoming more conscious of their history in an effort to hold on to their identity as Sokaogon Chippewa.

In 1974 Exxon made a major discovery of copper and zinc in Forest County, Wisconsin. That site just happened to be located on the northern border of the reservation, near Rice Lake. It is at least the tenth largest deposit of copper and zinc on the continent.²⁶ At present Exxon has not started any major mining activity and the debate continues over its potential effect on the land and the tribe. There are two camps of thought: first there are those who oppose mining because they believe the mine would destroy the surrounding ecological system, especially the wild rice; others view the mine as an opportunity for economic growth.

Since Exxon owns most of the mineral rights and some of the surface land, the Sokaogon Chippewa sued them in federal court in 1986, along with Forest, Langlade, and Oneida Counties, other private land owners, and the state of Wisconsin, in a land claim for the twelve square-mile reservation which the Chippewa contend that they and the government agreed to in 1855. The Sokaogon sought monetary compensation for the claim. After a series of motions, amended complaints, dismissals, and appeals, the case was remanded to the Federal District Court which ruled in summary judgment for the defendants.²⁷ The case is currently on appeal. It is clear that the Sokaogon still claim ownership to land beyond their recognized reservation and will continue to fight until they are fairly compensated for it.

The lost treaty and map are vital to the Sokaogon's struggle to achieve their goal of convincing the federal government that treaty negotiations did take place in 1855 which produced a map outlining a Sokaogon reservation. According to tribal attorney Milton Rosenberg, a tribe must prove that a clear, consistent description of the lands exists and was acknowledged by federal officials.²⁸ The lost map would satisfy part of the requirements, although the Sokaogon would be hard pressed to produce proof of acknowledgement by the government since no treaty was ratified.

It appears that the lost treaty may never have existed. All the reports concerning it could have been mistaken references to other treaties which the Sokaogon did sign. To the average Sokaogon growing up between 1860 and the early 1900s, who probably could not read or write, any document, whether a copy of a prior treaty or even a payroll or annuity list, could have been mistakenly referred to as the original lost treaty. Over the years its existence became a tradition, a testament to the rights the Sokaogon claimed. Although the treaty may not have existed, negotiations between Chief Mee-gee-see and some government official did take place. There is a good chance that that meeting was in 1855 with Commissioner Manypenny and may have produced some rough map which outlined Sokaogon land and possibly a future reservation. However, that speculation does not diminish the Sokaogon's claim to their traditional territory. Historical evidence proves that they controlled and managed the territory radiating some fifty to sixty miles from Post and Rice Lakes. Even though the government failed to recognize this, that memory remains strong in Sokaogon minds. The Lake Superior Chippewa have always shared a general consensus that the Sokaogon were always a separate group of Lake Superior Chippewa. Many local and federal officials agree with that proposition. Legally, the Sokaogon claim is weak in the light of the necessary documentation (i.e. treaties, map, etc.), however,

historically the truth remains, especially in the words of Peter McGeshick, Sr., "We have always been here."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA TREATIES 1826-1855

SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA TREATIES 1826-1855

1. TREATY WITH THE CHIPPEWA Aug. 5, 1826 (Rat. Feb. 7, 1827)

Treaty made and concluded at Fond du Lac of Lake Superior. Lewis Cass and Thomas L. McKenney commissioners on the part of the United States.

Signing under the Lac du Flambeau band:
Gitshee Waubeeshaans (Chief Kee-che-waub-ish-ash, Big Martin)
Gitshee Migeezee (Chief Mi-gee-see, Eagle)

2. TREATY WITH THE CHIPPEWA Oct. 4, 1842 (Rat. March 23, 1843)

Treaty made and concluded at LaPointe of Lake Superior. Robert Stuart commissioner on the part of the United States.

Signing under the Lake Bands:
Ki-ji-ua-be-she-shi (Chief Kee-she-waub-ish-ash, Big Martin)
Ke-kon-o-tum (2nd chief)

3. TREATY WITH THE CHIPPEWA OF THE MISSISSIPPI AND LAKE SUPERIOR Aug. 2, 1847 (Rat. April 3, 1848)

Treaty made and concluded at Fond du Lac of Lake Superior. Isaac A. Verplank and Henry M. Rice commissioners on the part of the United States.

Signing under the Pelican Lakes Band:
Kee-che-waub-ish-ash (Big Martin)
Nig-gig (Otter)

4. TREATY WITH THE CHIPPEWA Sep. 30, 1854 (Rat. Jan. 10, 1855)

Treaty made and concluded at LaPointe, in the State of Wisconsin. Henry C. Gilbert and David B. Herriman commissioners on the part of the United States.

Signing under the Lac Court Oreilles Band:
Ke-che-waw-be-shay-she (Kee-che-waub-ish-ash, Big Martin)

Signing under the Lac du Flambeau Band:
Me-gee-see (Mi-gee-see, Eagle)
Ne-gig (Nig-gig, Otter)

5. TREATY WITH THE CHIPPEWA Feb. 22, 1855 (Rat. March 3, 1855)

Treaty made and concluded in the city of Washington. George

W. Manypenny commissioner on part of the United States.

Signing under the Mississippi Bands:
Mi-gi-si (Mi-gee-see, Eagle)

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APPENDIX B

SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA CHIEFS

SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA CHIEFS

1. Chief Kee-che-waub-ish-ash, Big Martin, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1826-1854). Alternate spellings:

Gitshee Waubeeshaans
 Ki-ji-ua-be-she-shi
 Ke-che-waw-be-shay-she

2. Chief Mi-gee-see, Eagle, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1826-1860). Alternate spellings:

Gitshee Migeesee
 Me-gee-see
 Mi-gi-si

3. Chief Wau-be-shi-be-ne-se, White Eagle, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1860-1898).

4. Chief Wam-bash, John Seymour, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1899-1910).

5. Chief Me-sa-be, Edward Ackley, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1910-1927).

6. Chief Ge-ga-key-yoshi, DeWitt Ackley, Chief of the Sokaogon (ca. 1927-1929). Chief Ge-ga-key-yoshi was in poor health and decided his oldest son, Willard Leroy Ackley should take his place. He made a statement of release of his position and the band recognized that action.

7. Chief Ga-bay-is-gon, Willard Leroy Ackley Chief of the Sokaogon (1929-1937). After 1937 the Sokaogon formally organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. From then on the Sokaogon elected a tribal chairman who replaced the traditional chief.