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# The Dynamics of American Indian Diplomacy in the Great Lakes Region

**BENJAMIN RAMIREZ-SHKWEGNAABI**

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Throughout the nineteenth century Anishinaabeg leaders from the Great Lakes, wearing eagle feather headdresses and elegantly beaded bandolier bags, met in treaty councils with U.S. commissioners. Trained for years as astute listeners and eloquent speakers, these diplomats put their skills to the test as they negotiated with their non-Indian counterparts, whose primary responsibility was to serve the interests of the federal government. The stakes were high, for Native territories and lifeways were often at risk. Like most Native nations, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa (collectively known as Anishinaabeg) had long made alliances for purposes of war or peace, but not to formalize a permanent exchange of land. Faced with growing non-Indian demands for land, Anishinaabeg bands negotiated multiple treaties with the United States to maintain their sovereignty, well-being, and place on the land. Although bands regularly crossed borders between the United States and Canada for both trade and social reasons, Anishinaabeg found that non-Indian governments shaped diplomatic concerns in bands' home territories. As the doctrine and practice of manifest destiny swept through the Great Lakes and beyond, Anishinaabeg within the boundaries of the United States faced a different set of challenges than did their kin in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Anishinaabeg negotiations of both land cession and peace treaties with the United States had long-term consequences for their bands. Council journals recorded the treaty-making process in detail, thus meticulously preserving the words and even the actions of the councils' participants. Although council proceedings no longer survive for all Anishinaabeg treaties, a number of those extant reveal important continuities and shifts in American Indian diplomacy. Five of these are the focus of this study.

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FIGURE 1. Makwa Bimikwe ("Bear Tracks"). Courtesy of Anishinaabe artist Daniel Ramirez.



In the 1821 Treaty of Chicago, Potawatomi leaders facing a U.S. demand for land, ignored time-honored protocols of discussion and consensus and, as a result, made themselves vulnerable to the loss of thousands of acres and opened the door to a wave of white settlement in their homeland. Four years later and several hundred miles to the northwest, Anishinaabeg bands and their leaders, at the request of U.S. Indian agents, met with enemy Dakota leaders at Prairie du Chien in 1825. Although the resulting treaty failed to accomplish the American government's goal of ending territorial conflict, it was a proving ground for several men who became central figures in shaping the course of Anishinaabeg diplomacy in the nineteenth century. The following year, Anishinaabeg from Lake Superior who had not traveled south to Prairie du Chien met with U.S. representatives at Fond du Lac to accept the provisions of the 1825 treaty. Here, stressed by the ravages of a disastrous winter, Anishinaabeg leaders introduced a note of accommodation not found in earlier negotiations. In the 1837 treaty of Fort Snelling, Anishinaabeg leaders in Minnesota, several of whom had come to prominence at the 1825 council, disregarded consensus-based protocol to further their own agendas and authorized the first major Anishinaabeg land cession treaty in the western Great Lakes region. In the fifth and last treaty council to be examined, the 1855 Treaty with the Ottawa and Chippewa of Michigan, Anishinaabeg negotiation underwent a significant shift, as leaders employed a sophisticated new diplomatic style combining older patterns of protocol with a more forceful and financially oriented approach that proved crucial to achieving their ultimate goal of remaining on their lands.<sup>2</sup>

With few exceptions, studies of Indian-U.S. treaties generally address articles and provisions of treaties, emphasizing U.S. gains and Indian losses, but rarely place the process in the context of diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> Treaty negotiation was complex, and the commissioner of Indian Affairs appointed a secretary and several interpreters who transcribed the entire procedure; the journals then became part of the official documents of treaty proceedings.<sup>4</sup> Although written in English (with all the problems inherent in translation), they provide an almost unparalleled written account of Anishinaabeg and non-Indian interactions and reveal much of the actual face-to-face negotiation between the two peoples.<sup>5</sup> Where treaties enumerate land cessions, annuities, and such, treaty journals provide firsthand accounts of the discussions leading to the treaty articles.

Treaty journals allow readers to listen over the shoulders of Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa chiefs almost as the members of their bands and villages might have. We become immediately involved with the clashing desires, wants, and needs of both Anishinaabeg and Americans. The give-and-take recorded in treaty journals allows us to experience the complexity of Native diplomacy, especially negotiation protocols, rhetoric, tactics, strategies, and the responsibilities of leaders. Both Anishinaabeg and Americans had procedural rules of diplomacy with distinct concepts of information control and time management and with very different cultural perspectives. The journals also indicate shifts in Anishinaabeg diplomacy in response to changing cultural and economic circumstances and their increased familiarity with American ways.<sup>6</sup>



Anishinaabeg had lived in the Great Lakes area for hundreds of years before encountering Europeans. Traditional stories recount their migration from the Atlantic seaboard to the Great Lakes area (present-day Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ontario) about six to nine hundred years ago, and how they settled as far west as Onigamiising (Duluth). Along the route, the teachings say, the people divided into three groups: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. Although their languages and cultural patterns differentiated somewhat over time, they remained loosely joined in the "Three Fires," a flexible political and economic alliance. As a nineteenth-century Odawa *ogimaa*, or leader, Chamblee, explained, "We Three nations—Chippewas, Pottawatomies, and Odawas—have but one council fire." This alliance enabled the Anishinaabeg to remain a major power in the Great Lakes region well into the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The three groups had similar economies, sociopolitical structures, and ways of life. They hunted, fished, gathered, and farmed on a seasonally nomadic basis within specific regions loosely controlled by bands composed of family groups. Their clan system assigned each *doodem*, or clan, unique governmental obligations and remained a central force in Anishinaabeg life throughout the nineteenth century. Social organization was essentially egalitarian; women and men had complementary social, ceremonial, and political responsibilities and roles.<sup>8</sup> Anishinaabeg believed that community survival was paramount and their reliance on consensus decision-making helped ensure this. Each person could play a part in the process, although factions might swing decisions one way or another. At the family group level, each adult had a say in decisions. Decision-making had a specific protocol that demanded the examination of a question from multiple perspectives. At band and district levels, community members chose village leaders who represented them.<sup>9</sup>

Anishinaabeg *ogimaag* (leaders) were men and women who excelled in areas such as warfare, medicine, hunting, or singing. They did not lead by force or authority (in the European sense), but rather secured their power through service to their communities. There were two main categories of *ogimaag*: war chiefs and civil leaders. War chiefs were typically young warriors, of lower rank than civil chiefs, who had proved their leadership in war. Ideally they supported the civil *ogimaag* and asserted their authority only in times of conflict. Civil leaders (by the nineteenth century this was often a hereditary rank) had a responsibility to provide for the welfare of their people, much as parents had responsibility for their children. "He was a father to his people; they looked on him as children do to a parent; and his lightest wish was immediately performed," said a principal warrior of Curly Head, a Mississippi Ojibwe civil chief whose relationship with his people was based on ensuring their well-being: "His lodge was ever full of meat, to which the hungry and destitute were ever welcome. The traders vied with one another who should treat him best, and the presents which he received at their hands he always distributed to his people without reserve. When he had plenty, his people wanted not."<sup>10</sup>

Civil and war *ogimaag* bore the heavy responsibility of negotiating with the United States. The Anishinaabeg had a long tradition of frequent and



complex negotiation with other Indian peoples, and the *ogimaag* who represented them at councils were trusted for their diplomatic and rhetorical skills. By the nineteenth century, Anishinaabeg leaders were well traveled and many had been to metropolitan areas such as Detroit or Washington. And having negotiated with the British and French for many years, they were familiar with the complexities of intercultural diplomacy.<sup>11</sup>

Anishinaabeg diplomacy demanded strict adherence to ceremony and time-honored protocol. Early council journals reveal that Indian, European, or American treaty councils followed a set pattern. The proceedings relied heavily upon the symbolism of the pipe (calumet) and wampum belt and strings. The party responsible for calling the council opened the meetings with a speech of welcome that called on all participants to meet in good faith. At a council hosted by the French in Detroit on 30 July 1704, for example, the speaker for the Hurons, Odawas, and Miamis opened the session by saying to their Iroquois guests, "Our custom, my brothers, as you know, is to use calumets; hence we present one to you. We invite you to receive it with eyes of friendship and goodwill. We pray that the sky and the sun may be ever calm and ever bright, and that no cloud may darken or hide it."<sup>12</sup> He presented them with a pipe and the council concluded for the day. Pipe ceremonies underscored the solemnity of a situation. Tobacco smoke carried messages to the spirit world asking for help in decision-making, and participation in the ceremony indicated the participants' willingness to meet with a clean mind.

Councils lasted from three days to three weeks; each day opened with a call to the session, often with a gun volley. Speakers usually presented special gifts to convey the sincerity of the messages they brought on behalf of their nations or communities. The speakers for all parties at the 1704 council presented wampum belts to one another to symbolize their contractual agreements. "Fear nothing," the Iroquois speaker said, "be assured that we wish to live in close alliance with you, and this I ratify with you by this belt."<sup>13</sup> Europeans and Americans also followed this protocol in their negotiations with Anishinaabeg and others. At a 1778 council in Detroit between the British and Odawa, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Huron, and others, Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton gave six wampum strings and a wampum belt to each of the thirteen nations present.<sup>14</sup> Invited participants responded to the opening comment with their own speeches, also using wampum, pipes, or war axes. By the 1778 council's end, the participants had exchanged among themselves a total of seven belts and thirty-five strings of wampum. Throughout the meetings the council host distributed such small gifts as clothing, jewelry, guns, and ammunition, as well as rum, brandy, and whiskey. Councils generally closed with a ceremony that included the exchange of symbolic gifts such as medals or axes. Anishinaabeg used wampum, pipes, axes, and other gifts in diplomacy well into the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

During councils, Anishinaabeg diplomats drew on a number of tactics ranging from rhetorical devices of kinship and supplication to demands for more time and invocation of leadership responsibilities. Many of these tactics were highly ritualized, again rising from time-honored procedures. Anishinaabeg had a long-established diplomatic rhetoric based on kinship



and fictive kinship terminology. The opening speaker at the 1704 council referred to those gathered as "brothers." Similarly, in 1792 at a general council of nineteen nations held on the Glaize River with Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe participating, the first speaker addressed those present as follows: "Brothers, Uncles, and Nephews, this is the day which the Great Spirit has appointed for us all to meet together to consult on our General Interests in the good of all nations of our color."<sup>16</sup> In negotiations with Europeans and Americans, however, the rhetoric had shifted to that of a parent and child relationship. Chaminitawaa, an Odawa village chief, responded to Hamilton:

Father! I am chosen to speak the sentiments of the Outawaas, Chippaweys, and Poutwuattamies. Father! I beg you will listen to the words of your children and I beg they will be attentive. Father! Since I am appointed to speak for your children, I hope you will excuse any impropriety, in my speech, I am but a poor ignorant man. . . . Father! Where should we learn good sense but from you, 'tis from you we expect is everything that is good.<sup>17</sup>

Rather than indicating a subordinate relationship, such language drew on ceremonial forms of address and supplication that helped ease the process of negotiation. The use of parental or fraternal terms was a sign of respect, as was a request for help. This language also reiterated the reciprocal responsibilities inherent in all relationships.<sup>18</sup> Hamilton's opening speech at the 1778 treaty council clearly demonstrated this shift: "Children! I bid you all welcome," he proclaimed to the almost seventeen hundred men and women gathered around him, "War Chiefs, Village Chiefs, Warriors, old men, women & children—with these strings of wampum I open your eyes that you may see clear & your ears that you may listen to my words, since I speak by order of the great King my master, who is the Father of us all, whether of white or brown skins."<sup>19</sup> Indian speakers used child and parent rhetoric as well, thus emphasizing the obligations inherent in such a relationship.<sup>20</sup>

Alliances and treaties represented relationships that were to be entered into thoughtfully and carefully. Such important matters could take a week, a month, or more, and rushing the process might have serious consequences. Basil Johnston, an Ojibwe scholar, has observed that "there were many practical reasons for 'taking time,' but dominating them all was a reverence for 'the word'. To be asked to make a decision was to be asked to give 'word', an awesome request."<sup>21</sup> Following the initial pipe ceremony and speech by the host, Indian leaders routinely thanked the speaker and informed him that they would take time to think over his words and begin discussions the following day. *Ogimaag* frequently met with one another before and after the opening sessions of treaty councils to share information and coordinate tactics. Throughout the course of the treaty councils, *ogimaag* frequently called for a halt to the proceedings to discuss issues among themselves.<sup>22</sup>

The responsibilities of leadership demanded that Anishinaabeg diplomats consult with their communities on major issues or decisions that arose in the course of a council. Leaders understood their long-term responsibility to



their people. Ojibwe chief Ogimagiigido's remarks to Lewis Cass, territorial governor of Michigan, at the 1819 treaty council at Saginaw, Michigan clearly indicated this:

We are here to smoke the pipe of peace, but not to sell our lands. Our American father wants them. . . . Our waters grow warm; our land melts like a cake of ice; our possessions grow smaller and smaller; the warm wave of the white man rolls in upon us and melts us away. Our women reproach us. Our children want homes: shall we sell from under them the spot where they spread their blankets?<sup>23</sup>

The *ogimaa* not only was concerned with keeping the people protected, but understood his responsibility to care for and to ensure the well-being of future generations. This perception was undoubtedly reinforced by the frequent presence of entire communities at treaty councils throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

For the Anishinaabeg the 1820s through the 1850s were times of challenge and change. The U.S. victory in the War of 1812 marked a turning point in their relations with the American government. Following the war's end, nationalism and the desires of increasing numbers of white settlers for Indian land prompted a rush to acquire new territory. Peace and land cession treaties in the Great Lakes and trans-Mississippi regions between 1814 and 1820 fueled American appetites for acquiring land in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. From 1820 onward, Anishinaabeg came under increasing pressure from U.S. diplomats and politicians, who urgently desired their land and were not above physically removing them to far-off Indian Country.<sup>25</sup>

In 1821, nearly three thousand Potawatomi, as well as some Ojibwe and Odawa, converged on Chicago to attend treaty proceedings with the United States Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory and Solomon Sibley had begun preparations in 1820, hoping to acquire Potawatomi lands not negotiated in the earlier treaties of 1816.<sup>26</sup> By setting the treaty site at the small fort and settlement of Chicago, distant from the Potawatomi villages, they hoped the Anishinaabeg would be more inclined to relinquish their lands. This council, in which both sides disregarded accepted protocol and periods for deliberation, ultimately proved to be disastrous for the Potawatomi.<sup>27</sup>

On the eve of the opening session, Cass had distributed large quantities of alcohol and the negotiations had a slow start the next day. Following the opening pipe ceremony, Cass moved directly to discussion of land cessions in the St. Joseph River region of Michigan. In exchange for Potawatomi land that Cass claimed was virtually unused, the United States offered goods, an annuity, back payments still due from the treaty of 1816, and the establishment of reservations. He assured the Potawatomi that they would have use of the ceded lands until white settlers arrived. The governor gave them a limited time to consider the offer: "It is expected that you will have sufficient time to deliberate by the day after tomorrow: this will give you plenty of time to ascertain each other's opinions, and to determine what is best for your own interest. We shall then expect your answer." His pressure for a prompt



decision, quite alien to Anishinaabeg protocol, left little time for discussion or consensus, and tensions at the council heightened because thousands of acres of Potawatomi homeland were at stake.<sup>28</sup>

The council convened again two days later, with the full ranks of the Potawatomi present to ensure that all were aware of any decisions made. Metea, principal civil *ogimaa* of the Wabash band, expressed profound concern at renewed American interest in Potawatomi lands:

Father, we have given you a great tract of land already, but it is not enough to satisfy you. We sold it to you for the benefit of your children, to farm, and to live upon. We have now but little left. We shall want it all for ourselves. We know not how long we may live, and we wish to leave some lands for our children to hunt upon. You are gradually taking away the country, which is our only inheritance. Treaty after treaty is called, and piece after piece is cut off from it. Neither are your children slow in taking possession of it. The ploughshare is driven through our tents before we have time to carry out our goods, and seek another habitation. We are growing uneasy. What lands you have, you may retain forever, but we shall sell to you no more.<sup>29</sup>

Metea spoke extensively about his people's land, reminding the U.S. representatives that Potawatomi ancestors lay buried there. He implored Cass to rescind his request and reminded him that "When you first spoke to us for lands, at St. Mary's we said we had little, and agreed to sell you a piece of it, but told you we could spare no more." He observed that any further cessions would have a devastating effect on his people. "Now you ask us again. You are never satisfied. . . . If we sell you any more of our country, we do not know what will come of us! Our women and children must suffer."<sup>30</sup> Cass minimized the implications of Metea's words by insisting that the United States wanted only to protect its Indian children. His offer was more valuable than land, he claimed:

I am surprised, that with such ample territories you should utter one word, about the smallness of your country. The presents we have brought along, and the annuities which you would receive, would be vastly more important, than any game you can procure upon your lands.<sup>31</sup>

Although Metea vehemently opposed further land cessions, the Potawatomi were unable to reach consensus, perhaps deterred by the limited time available to them. The elderly chief Tiponabee (who had originally agreed with Metea), succumbing to the lure of whiskey and trade goods, pushed for a deal. Furthermore, to Metea's surprise, the Odawa and Ojibwe participants' desire for presents, whiskey, and other U.S. promises proved to be strong temptation, and they urged the Potawatomi to accept the U.S. offer.<sup>32</sup> Metea's eloquent objections to the treaty notwithstanding, Cass' pressure led to a quick agreement, and the Potawatomi lost large land holdings. The resulting treaty ceded all their land in southwestern Michigan, with the exception of a



few small tracts and reservations, in exchange for annuities for Potawatomi and for Odawa, a blacksmith, and a teacher paid by the Indian agency to instruct the local Anishinaabeg.<sup>33</sup>

West of Chicago, long-standing hostilities between Ojibwe and Dakota in Minnesota had erupted into ongoing conflicts over hunting territories and wild rice fields. Communities and hunting parties inflicted frequent deprivations on one another, and in the early nineteenth century these border wars resulted in an increasingly high death toll. In 1825, Major Lawrence Taliaferro, newly appointed Indian agent at Fort Snelling, called for a council “to treat with, and mediate between, the chiefs, headmen, and other representatives of the Sioux, Sac, Fox, Iowa, Chippewa, Menominee, Winnebago, Pottawatomie, Ottawa, [and] Chippewa of the Illinois.”<sup>34</sup>

The charge of the commissioners for the treaty council, General William Clark and Governor Lewis Cass, was to establish peace between warring Indian nations by setting specific boundaries demarcating their territories. Ultimately, the commissioners hoped, such a peace would make the area safer for white settlement and trade. Although the council did not achieve a lasting peace, it did establish the concept of firmly bounded territory. Moreover, it was one of the last councils participated in by three major *ogimaag*, Broken Tooth, Shinguaba W’ossin, and Curly Head, and it was a venue for rising leaders such as Hole-in-the-Day and Flat Mouth. The *ogimaags*’ goal at this council was to maintain control over the full extent of their territories and to make U.S. authorities aware of their leadership roles.<sup>35</sup>

In keeping with protocol, Clark ordered a large bower erected near the fort and on 5 August opened the council with the traditional greeting and speech of welcome in which he set out the reasons for the council. He assured the participants that the United States was merely a disinterested mediator and informed them that their ongoing conflicts resulted from a lack of defined boundaries: “Children, Your great Father has not sent us here to ask any thing from you—we want nothing, not the smallest piece of your land, not a single article of your property.” Clark requested that the *ogimaag* meet with him after the gun signal the next day and concluded the session with a pipe ceremony.<sup>36</sup>

The following morning, some of the assembled leaders addressed Clark’s proposition that they establish firm boundaries, but only two covered specific issues. The first, Nooden of Snake River, expressed his fears that firm boundaries would diminish his territory, rather than having a beneficial effect. “My father . . . I wish to live in peace,” he stated, “but in running marks round our country or in giving it to our enemies it may make new disturbances and breed new wars.”<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, Shinguaba W’ossin of Sault Ste. Marie stressed his concern that the young men in his band would resist any attempt to set borders. The other speakers—The Tract, Mushkua (Flat Mouth), and The Ebbing Water—declined to voice their opinions, yet Cass parried Nooden and Shinguaba W’ossin’s objections by warning them of the Americans’ power.<sup>38</sup> He reiterated U.S. determination to establish boundaries and peace, drawing on the parent/child metaphor to give weight to his demand. “The peace that is to be made must be a solid one. Your Great Father will stand between you all to



secure it. He has strong limbs & piercing eyes, and arms that stand from the Sea to the Red River." Challenging the *ogimaag* to exert authority over their bands, he insisted that the old men take the tomahawks from the young and "throw them in the fire."<sup>39</sup>

When Cass asked Broken Tooth how he justified his claim to a vast territory that included Dakota territory, Hole-in-the-Day, then a pipe carrier for the *ogimaa* Curly Head, boldly retorted, "Upon the same ground, sir, that our Great Father claimed this country from the British King, by conquest! We drove them from the country by force of arms and have since occupied it; and they cannot, and dare not, try to dispossess us of our habitations."<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the Anishinaabeg leaders' fears were somewhat allayed, and on August 19, after two weeks of negotiation, the participating bands signed the treaty. The minutes suggest that the Ojibwe and Dakota leaders were reluctant to resolve their differences over appropriate boundaries publicly, but instead reached agreements in private meetings. Clark, careful to observe protocol, passed a wampum belt to all the principal men and told them to consider it "a religious contract between all the tribes which are represented on it." The following day each band received a copy of its treaty and the council ended with a ceremony in which all participants passed their pipes and presented pipes to the commissioners.<sup>41</sup>

In 1826, approximately 350 Ojibwe *ogimaag* and warriors from around Lake Superior traveled to Fond du Lac (present Duluth) to meet in council with American representatives. The treaty proceedings reveal a shift in the language of negotiation from a display of strength to a self-protective accommodation. The bands were destitute, as the harsh winter of 1825–1826 had left many people on the brink of starvation. Gitchee Waabezhaas, drawing on the time-honored language of supplication and obligation, emphasized his people's poverty and hunger. "When I heard of your coming, I thought your hands were not empty," he told treaty commissioner Lewis Cass, "I expected to find something in them for your children. . . . You, Father, travel in a full canoe. Your young men always see enough before them. But my canoe, Father, is empty. Even my women and children, whom I left in my cabin, are naked and hungry."<sup>42</sup> Given their desperate circumstances, Gitchee Waabezhaas, Tahgwawane, Yellow Thunder, and other *ogimaag* gathered at Fond du Lac stressed their bands' neediness rather than striving to impress or resist the Americans.

At the council's opening session, Cass stated that the treaty's sole purpose was to confirm the boundaries established at Prairie du Chien, but he mentioned an additional item that revealed an agenda beyond peace agreements and borders. "We also wish that you would allow your Great Father to look through the country, and take such copper as he may find," Cass mentioned; "This copper does you no good, and it would be useful to us to make into kettles, buttons, bells, and a great many other things."<sup>43</sup>

Although Anishinaabeg and earlier Native people had mined the region's rich mineral deposits for several millennia, Shinguaba W'ossin, principal chief of the Sault Ste. Marie band, rather than contesting Cass' claim, urged the others to make their copper resources available to the Americans: "If you have



any copper on your lands, I advise you to sell it. It is of no advantage to us. They can convert it into articles for our use. If any one of you has any knowledge on this subject, I ask you to bring it to light." Other leaders confirmed the existence of copper deposits but noted that British mining efforts had failed. Although they did not object to allowing the U.S. access to the copper, they did demand that any profits be split with the weakened and impoverished bands.<sup>44</sup>

Cass then used the bands' disadvantaged condition to press for other changes advantageous to the U.S. policies of territorial expansion and of concentrating Native populations to limited areas with "civilizing" influences. "We find you are very poor," he observed. "Your women and children have little to eat and less to wear. Your Great Father is willing to help you. He will allow you some goods every year to clothe yourselves with. He is also willing, if you wish it, to establish a school at the Sault, where your children will be instructed."<sup>45</sup> The Ojibwe, whose goal for this treaty was to improve their circumstances, accepted the 1825 treaty and agreed to set boundaries with the Menominee and Winnebago in the following year. They also granted permission to search for metals and minerals on their lands, set aside lands for mixed-blood members, and acknowledged the authority of the United States. In return, the United States authorities established annuities of \$2,000 and monies for schools.<sup>46</sup>

Although the intent of the 1825 and 1826 treaties was to establish recognized boundaries separating Anishinaabeg and Dakota, the violent contest for territory resumed almost immediately. In response, the United States transferred the Indian agency that handled issues pertaining to the Ojibwe from Fort Snelling to La Pointe, Wisconsin, increasing the difficulty of diplomatic efforts for Minnesota Anishinaabeg. From 1827 through 1836, disagreement over boundaries, combined with trade-related tensions, led to ongoing warfare in the western areas. A treaty council jointly called by Ojibwe ogimaa Hole-in-the-Day and Dakota leader Little Crow at Prairie du Chien in 1830 resulted in a slight decrease of conflict, but it had escalated again by 1832. The Ojibwe continued to press into Dakota lands, establishing settlements as far west as Turtle Mountain in North Dakota and south as far as Crow Wing and Rice Lake in Minnesota. The conflict over land shaped the decade following the Prairie du Chien and Fond du Lac treaties but it was a contest between Native nations. Over the next thirty years, however, the struggle continued but the parameters shifted profoundly with the entry of a third party, the United States.<sup>47</sup>

In July 1837 more than one thousand Minnesota Ojibwe accompanied their leaders to a treaty council called by Governor Henry Dodge at Fort Snelling. In response to pressure from Mississippi Valley businessmen for the United States to acquire Ojibwe lands east of the Mississippi River, the secretary of war had appointed Dodge, a strong proponent of such a purchase, to negotiate a treaty with the Ojibwe. Early in the negotiation, after "the usual ceremonies for opening a council with the Indians," Dodge proposed to buy "a small part" of Ojibwe territory, claiming, much as Cass had to the Potawatomi in 1821, that the land had no hunting value and was unsuited to agriculture. The pine stands, however, were of great interest to the United States. The governor assured the Ojibwe that the United States would pay full compensation based on an estimate of probable value and then asked them



to name a price, Anishinaabeg circumstances had improved since the starving years of 1825–1826, and their leaders were surprised that Dodge presented them with such a demand. They responded to his blunt request with delaying tactics, refusing to answer until all the bands involved had arrived. They similarly declined to meet with him the following day.<sup>48</sup>

The third day of the council continued in the same fashion—the *ogimaag* insisted that protocol be observed and council proceedings be delayed until all participants were in place. When Dodge urged them at least to tell him their thoughts about his proposal, five leaders stepped forward and reiterated that they were waiting for “other men of power and authority” to arrive. Indeed, Pe-zhe-ke verged on insult, obliquely reminding Dodge of diplomatic etiquette. He “remarked, that he was quite deaf, and could not hear distinctly what was said; that he had seen the Governors lips move, and turned each ear to him to listen, but could not hear well his words.” Pe-zhe-ke repeated that the *ogimaag* would not speak until the others had arrived. Payajik followed this with a reminder of the importance of council protocol, complaining of the lack of gifts, especially tobacco and whiskey. He, too, reminded Dodge of the obligations of a council host and the responsibilities of leaders:

My Father. Your children are not displeased with what you have said to them—but they wish you to give them four times more tobacco than you have yet given them. My Father, what has happened to you? Have you cut off your breasts that you can not suckle your children? If you did so, it would render them more pliant and ready to yield to your wishes. This was the case at the Prairie de Chien in 1825. I was there, and know what was done.<sup>49</sup>

On 24 July, Dodge, having learned that four of those expected had arrived and fifty more were on the way, asked what those present had to say. Nooden, advancing to the governor’s table with Pe-zhe-ke, skillfully put Dodge off once again. “My father. I am very sorry to keep you so long, in a painful state of suspense upon the matter which you have proposed to us.” He then spoke for Pe-zhe-ke, who had remained standing at his side. “When I look at you it frightens me. I can not sufficiently estimate your importance and it confuses me. I have seen a great many Americans, but never one whose appearance struck me as yours does.” While it is hard to determine Pe-zhe-ke’s intent with this statement, it is tempting to speculate that he and Nooden had arranged for a “good cop/bad cop” scenario. Shagobai picked up on the same idea. “My Father. I heard of you, when I was yet a young man, along time ago; & now I see you. I am frightened when you look at me. I am startled when the wind comes rustling by; and the thundercloud, tho’ I know it will pass along without harming, alarms me. So it is, my father, when you talk to your children around you, of their lands; which you wish to buy from them.”<sup>50</sup> Repeating the scene from previous days, eleven other *ogimaag* successively informed the governor that they still were not ready to discuss the sale of their lands. Only Majigaabo of Leech Lake urged the others to sell and to demand more presents and provisions, especially cattle.



On 25 July the leaders from three Wisconsin bands (La Pointe, Lac de Flambeau, and Lac Courte Oreille) finally arrived, but they announced that they were not ready or willing to meet. It was not until the seventh day of the council that all parties at last met together. Governor Dodge immediately set out the U.S. offer to purchase Ojibwe land, asking the *ogimaag* to examine the map he provided them and to indicate if they were ready to sell. When the newcomers requested yet another day he agreed, but stipulated that they be represented by only two chiefs when all met in council. The civil chiefs appointed Majigaabo and Hole-in-the-Day as their representatives. Majigaabo strode to the governor's table the next morning and planted his war flag in front of it. His appearance was formidable—his hair hanging loose, he wore an eagle feather headdress made by the chiefs, who had also hung their medals around his neck. Turning to the assembled leaders, he gestured toward a map on the council table and affirmed that he had full authority to represent them. He then faced Dodge, saying, "This is the country which is the home of many of your children. I have covered it with a paper (he had done so) and so soon as I remove that paper, the land shall be yours. But should the Wind blow it off, that shall not make it so. I have listened closely to the words that the Chiefs have told me to say to you."<sup>51</sup>

The civil leaders had decided to sell to the United States with the explicit understanding that they reserved the right to hunt, fish, and live on ceded lands. Majigaabo explained this with classic Anishinaabeg diplomatic rhetoric—a metaphor employing both history and supplication:

My Father, Listen to me. Of all the country that we grant you we wish to hold on to a tree where we get our living, & to reserve the streams where we drink the waters that give us life. I have but a few words to say, but they are those of the Chiefs, and very important. What I am now going to say to you, is a kind of history of our Chiefs. The Being that created us, made us naked, He created you and your people with knowledge and power to get a living. Not so with us; we had to cover ourselves with moss and rotten wood; & you must be merciful to us. The Chiefs will now show you the tree we want to reserve.<sup>52</sup>

Literally laying Ojibwe demands on the table, Majigaabo placed an oak sprig representing the lands to be ceded next to the map and named their price. The Americans could buy the land for sixty years with annual payments to both full- and mixed-blood band members. All were to have full use of ceded lands and additional land was to be set aside for mixed bloods. Drawing perhaps on earlier use of wampum belts for contractual matters, he presented Dodge with a paper enumerating the nineteen villages represented by the *ogimaag*. However, he retained another paper because he wished "to say something more on it" at the conclusion of the treaty. Dodge informed the *ogimaag* that the United States did not rent land, but only bought it in perpetuity, and stated that the bands themselves would have to provide for mixed bloods with cash proceeds from the sale. He also recommended that part of annuity payments be set aside to pay for American teachers, farming instructors, blacksmiths, and millers.<sup>53</sup>



The next day (28 July) Flat Mouth—who the previous day had threatened to go home because he was tired of hearing the many reports going back and forth about “putting out the fires” of the white men and driving the traders out—spoke at length for the *ogimaag*. He reiterated that the Ojibwe wished to remain on their lands and retain rights to maple sugaring, hunting, and fishing. Dodge, in response, assured those gathered that it would probably be “many years” before the United States wanted the land for white settlers. He then made a final offer of a fixed annuity for twenty years and recommended that they pay part of their money to their “half breeds” and the traders.<sup>54</sup>

A heated discussion over the debts owed to traders ensued. Flat Mouth, speaking for the *ogimaag* but against his own judgment, contended that the United States should pay the traders. He challenged the governor’s intention to allocate part of the settlement toward cattle and schools, maintaining that the Ojibwe should receive payment in full. He insisted that the proposed twenty-year annuity was not close to the value of the land. “My Father,” he reproached Dodge, “If it was my land you was buying, I would—instead of an annuity for only 20 year—demand one from you, as long as the ground lasted.” Dodge, observing that payments to mixed bloods and traders was only a recommended act of kindness and justice, agreed to a total of \$800,000. Flat Mouth responded angrily that he would not have come to the council had he known that old accounts would be held against them. He pointed out that the traders had long exploited young Ojibwe men to hunt for them without much compensation, and also had not paid for fish, game, water, or wood that they had appropriated from Ojibwe lands.<sup>55</sup>

Despite Flat Mouth’s pointed observations, the next day Dodge instructed the chiefs to determine if and how they would pay the “half breeds.” As the *ogimaag* sat down to confer, a large group of warriors in battle dress rushed the council lodge with war flags flying. Their spokesman, the minor civil chief Shagobai, stated that although reluctant to oppose the civil leaders, they wanted the traders paid from the governor’s funds. They threatened to return home without signing the treaty if he refused. Dodge agreed and then asked the civil chiefs for their views. At this, Hole-in-the-Day excitedly proclaimed to the council: “Chiefs, what we agreed and determined upon yesterday; shall consent to undo, when my head is severed from my body and my life no more—We must abide by it, firmly. Braves! There are many of you—but none of you have done what I have—nor are any of you my equals!!” His dramatic pronouncement proved to be a skillful diplomatic maneuver that saved the day for Dodge, but it also exaggerated his own authority.<sup>56</sup>

Hole-in-the-Day’s outburst put him in good stead with U.S. commissioners, but many Ojibwe later objected to his use of pressure tactics to convince other *ogimaag* to sign the treaty without further amendment. Indeed, Lyman Warren later told Henry Schoolcraft that Taliaferro used his friendship with Hole-in-the-Day to induce the civil leaders to accept an unfairly low price. The delaying tactics the *ogimaag* had so carefully employed throughout the negotiations thus lost out to Hole-in-the-Day’s grandstanding. Perhaps, as Warren claimed, Hole-in-the-Day had exploited the factions between civil and war chiefs to advance himself as a diplomat at the expense of the Anishinaabeg



people.<sup>57</sup> His actions might also be viewed as a manifestation of changes taking place within Ojibwe diplomacy. In response to internal politics and the growing complexity of dealing with the United States, *ogimaag* with knowledge of U.S. diplomatic and economic practices became increasingly powerful in Anishinaabeg treaty negotiations. The 1837 treaty had devastating consequences for the Anishinaabeg, who ceded almost all their land east of the Mississippi as far as the Wisconsin River, reserving only "use" rights to the land along with the right to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice.

The 1830s to the 1850s proved difficult years not only for Anishinaabeg in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but also for communities farther east, where the Odawa and Ojibwe bands of northern Michigan were in a state of flux. The non-Indian population in Michigan had increased exponentially with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and statehood in 1837. By 1855, land-hungry white settlers actively sought access to Indian lands, supported by state and federal officials. U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny, for example, wanted Native peoples in Michigan and elsewhere restricted to reservations or allotments where "civilization programs" promoted a transition to Christian farmers.<sup>58</sup> To this end, between 1853 and 1856 Manypenny and his appointed agents concluded fifty-two treaties with Indian bands and tribes.<sup>59</sup>

In 1855 the U.S. government negotiated a treaty with the Odawa and Ojibwe people of northern Michigan for cession of their land and the creation of permanent reservations. In addition, to further the "civilization" and assimilation of Indian people, the treaty offered permanent allotments in severalty to promote sedentary farming. Motivated by a desire to "conduct the Michigan treaty business as cheaply as possible," Indian agent Henry Gilbert and Commissioner George Manypenny hoped to conclude the treaty council quickly.<sup>60</sup>

By 1855, the Anishinaabeg of Michigan had been involved in numerous treaty negotiations with the United States. Since the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and through the treaties of 1807, 1819, and 1836 they had learned that they could not count on the United States to honor treaty agreements.<sup>61</sup> Much like the Minnesota Ojibwe, the Anishinaabeg of Michigan had ceded millions of acres in treaties made in 1836, and had received in return temporary reservations, a permanent annuity, and usufructuary hunting and fishing rights for five years. Moreover, they faced the possibility of removal west of the Mississippi River, they did not have title to their remaining lands, and payments due them from earlier treaties had yet to be honored.

During the last weeks of July, Ojibwe and Odawa bands from northern Michigan sent representatives to Detroit to negotiate with Manypenny and Office of Indian Affairs agents. The council journal for the 1855 Ottawa and Chippewa treaty reveals a major shift in Anishinaabeg negotiation styles. At the 1837 Treaty of Fort Snelling, Hole-in-the-Day and other *ogimaag* clearly understood the attitudes and dependability of U.S. government officials and agents, but were not comfortable with or schooled in the non-Indian way of doing business. They lived in a world still largely removed from that of most whites—a fact that was reflected in the treaty negotiations. Time-honored protocol and



ceremony were paramount and most of the *ogimaag* were loath to veer from them. Also, they were not yet well versed in the intricacies of the written word; Majigaabo used maps and other papers as symbolic devices, much as wampum had been used in the preceding decades. The *ogimaag* at Fort Snelling were largely unaware of the legal subtleties distinguishing usufruct and fee simple ownership when they ceded their lands to Governor Dodge.

In Michigan, by 1855 longer and more constant interactions with whites had given Anishinaabeg a much greater degree of familiarity with non-Indian diplomacy and financial matters. By this time they understood many American business and financial practices, including the concept of "interest on the principle."<sup>62</sup> The northern Michigan bands, who did not want to be removed to Indian Country and were prepared to negotiate transactions involving permanent sale of their lands in exchange for specified payments and permanent reservations, recognized the usefulness of speaking, reading, and calculating in English and stressed the need for quality mainstream education. Although Anishinaabeg protocol remained important, diplomats now took a new approach that combined traditional ceremony and rhetoric with almost blunt questioning in pursuit of detailed financial information.

The five bands had appointed Aasagan, an Odawa *ogimaa* from Cheyboygan, and Wawbegeeg, a Sault Ste. Marie Ojibwe, as head speakers. Both had participated at the 1836 treaty council, which had given them ample opportunity to observe U.S. treaty negotiations. The treaty journal gives no indication that opening ceremonies were conducted; Gilbert apparently opened the council on 25 July by explaining its purpose and introducing Commissioner Manypenny. Aasagan promptly requested that discussion not begin until all Anishinaabeg delegates had arrived, a delaying strategy employed in many previous treaty councils. When Gilbert asked Aasagan to explain his request for a delay, he answered that they needed "time to consult." With that, the council adjourned and the Anishinaabeg did not return until the following morning, probably retiring to their lodges to plan their strategies.<sup>63</sup>

The next day all Anishinaabeg and U.S. parties had arrived. Eager to conduct treaty business, Manypenny abruptly convened the session:

When the council parted yesterday, I hoped to get you together again in the afternoon; but for reasons, best known to yourselves, I was unable to do so. It is now my desire to impress upon you the necessity of the diligence and the importance of time in doing your business, and hope that they will be assiduous in doing their business—, business of so great importance to them and their children.<sup>64</sup>

However, having learned from experience some valuable lessons on U.S. unreliability in financial dealings, Anishinaabeg leaders were in no rush to commit to Manypenny's plan. Manypenny's opening remarks dismissed concerns over payments for previous treaties brought to his attention the previous winter in Washington, D.C., by two delegations of Odawa and Ojibwe. Aasagan responded to the commissioner by telling him what the Anishinaabeg expected of this council: "I want to speak of the past. Twenty



years ago it is, since we treated with you[,] sold you our lands. It is because twenty years are nearly past to settle the business of those years that we are here. We expect justice from you. In regard to what you admonish us that we look to the interest of [our] children, we reply that is our design." Aasagan, Wawbegeeg, and other Anishinaabeg representatives deliberately took the United States to task for failure to fulfill earlier treaty stipulations. Aasagan's hard-driving series of questions suggests that during the pre-council meetings in Mackinaw the *ogimaag* had asked him to be the heavy, to ask the questions that put U.S. representatives on the spot.<sup>65</sup>

During the entire six-day council, Aasagan and Wawbegeeg had U.S. negotiators on the defensive and demanded detailed answers to financial questions as well as an accounting of money still due them from the 1836 treaty.<sup>66</sup> Manypenny appeared unprepared for such interrogation and he and Gilbert were often at a loss to explain why the United States had so many unkept promises from 1836 and earlier treaties. Following a round of unproductive and heated discussions, Aasagan warned Manypenny and Gilbert that it would take more than empty promises to close the deal:

Father when you first sent word to your children to come & meet you here we held a Council at Macinac & talked about our affairs. And we thought that when you came here you would come prepared to answer us. Our great Father, sent you here to make final settlement of the affairs under the treaty of [18]36. We thought you would be ready to tell us all about the treaty. And now it is too late for us to answer you about the money today, & tomorrow is the Sabbath."<sup>67</sup>

When Aasagan asked Manypenny about the half-breed money set aside in the 1836 treaty, Manypenny said that he would have Agent Gilbert investigate it. More often than not, the commissioners were forced to admit that they did not have answers and would have to check on the matter and get back to the *ogimaag*.<sup>68</sup> Aasagan's questions underscored how unprepared Manypenny was for these negotiations and emphasized that if the United States wanted to negotiate it had to come up with money and resources to settle the deal.

Aasagan queried Gilbert over U.S. failure to pay 1836 treaty obligations, asking why the federal government retained payments due for ceded lands. "We want to know how much principal and interest of that sum is due to us?" Undeterred by Agent Gilbert's complicated response regarding the allocation of annuities and payments, Aasagan persistently demonstrated his financial acumen, "What has become of the money stipulated to be paid for improvements [under] Article 8th [of the] treaty of [18]36?" he demanded. Gilbert, however, was unprepared to answer such a specific question. Aasagan's interrogation of Gilbert continued as he inquired after monies due for schools, "half breeds," medical care, and to Indians who had gone to Canada. In each instance, Gilbert was unable to ascertain whether those appropriations could be accounted for. At one time, Aasagan's persistence was so intense that Henry Gilbert threatened to stop the negotiation if the *ogimaag* continued hounding him. Undeterred, Aasagan replied, "Father, you said to me the



other day I was rather extravagant in my demands. You seemed to think me a glutton, never satisfied. Now I live only on corn soup at home & you have every luxury of life. It is strange that I should try to get as good as you!"<sup>69</sup>

Wawbegeeg of Sault Ste. Marie also used a confrontational form of negotiation. He changed the discourse by asking Manypenny to discuss whether the Anishinaabeg were to be compensated for land given them west of the Mississippi. The Anishinaabeg of Michigan thought they were due money, since they had exchanged their Michigan lands in the 1836 treaty. Manypenny informed them that although they might have a claim, the government no longer had plans for removal and planned instead to give them "permanent homes." He offered to set up small reservations and begin a land allotment system that would allow them to hold land title in fee simple. However, American negotiators showed little intention of resolving long-overdue payments. Other *ogimaag* challenged the U.S. representatives, although less aggressively, always asking for a precise accounting of money or resources. Paybahmesay, a Grand River Odawa *ogimaag*, also reminded the commissioner of promises made by the United States in the 1836 Treaty of Washington, D.C. "We desire our father to open his ears to our humble petitions," he said, using the time-honored tactics of supplication and obligation, "to listen to us and pity us. God has kindly permitted us to live to see the settlement of the treaty made years ago with our fathers." Manypenny rebutted Paybahmesay's remarks, contending that all necessary adjustments had been made.<sup>70</sup>

In contrast to Aasagan's hard-driving interrogative style, Wasson, the principal chief from Manistee, took a less direct approach using more traditional forms of metaphor and supplication to make his points. Wasson, who had participated in the 1836 delegation to Washington, similarly stressed the U.S. obligation to keep promises made in that negotiation. He made it clear that, although they were willing to leave the monies in a government trust to accumulate interest, the Anishinaabeg wanted the funds owed them. With the eloquence of the practiced diplomat, Wasson compared fiduciary complacency to thoughtless husbandry: "The little swan, when he went out used to pick up little shillings in his bill and bring them to his master. At last his master got to think that the swan was all money and cut him open and found no money, so he lost his little swan." Unlike the careless master, however, the Anishinaabeg intended to maximize their resources. "Now, we don't want to cut our little swan open," Wasson explained, "We wish to let him live, that our father may feed him and he may grow and continue to bring up shillings in his bill."<sup>71</sup>

Gilbert proposed to take up the issue of old treaties if anyone saw fit; otherwise he intended to continue with the discussion of current relationships. He shifted the discussion to the U.S. plan to "civilize" the Anishinaabeg. Annuities, he claimed, were merely an aid in achieving self-sufficiency. Picking up on Wasson's analogy, he explained, "Now though we advise you to take care of the little swan, we want you to remember that by and by he will get so old that he will not pay for keeping." The United States had paid annuities to some other tribes and would pay the Anishinaabeg delinquent interest instead rather than the annuities, and would then add \$200,000 at the end of ten years, or longer if agreed upon. After all, he assured them, the Anishinaabeg



would soon be civilized and have no need of annuities.<sup>72</sup> Aasagan refused to let the annuities follow the swan song proposed by Gilbert. "Our father," he responded, "our minds have been a little troubled. Now since our little swan is to live ten years and not diminish by age, we wish you to feed him and are willing to take the interest and ten thousand dollars for ten years. And we wish you in the meantime to take good care of the swan so that we shall find him in good order." Although Aasagan understood the value of continuing a permanent annuity, which would have assured funding for future generations, he accepted the United States' time restriction of ten years.<sup>73</sup>

A major Anishinaabeg concern at the 1855 treaty council was securing permanent homes on land that had "strong title" that could not be taken from them. Before departing for Detroit, Assagon had met in council with his band, which decided that it preferred a settlement in money to one in reservation land. This would allow them to choose and purchase their own plots. When the *ogimaag* from all the participating bands met at Mackinac before heading to the treaty meetings, they reached a similar understanding. At the council, however, the Anishinaabeg and Manypenny came to an agreement on a land settlement rather than cash. When the consensus shifted, Aasagan, despite his hard-driving new negotiating style, nonetheless needed his band's approval to accept an arrangement other than that agreed upon by the community. He informed the treaty council that "I am but a delegate and must do what I was instructed. I will go home and tell my people of your proposals."<sup>74</sup>

Manypenny saw little sense in Aasagan returning to his community to discuss the new terms. He instead appealed to the Anishinaabeg leader's ego, stressing that a wise man would take matters into his own hands for the benefit of his people. "You have done your duty in making the request of your people," he informed the speaker. "Now, as a wise man, your next inquiry is, what shall you do in the circumstances you find around you? The only conclusion, to my mind, that you can come at it that it is not a violation but a performance of your duty to take land."<sup>75</sup> Manypenny believed that the situation called for expediency rather than more consultation and discussion.

Although the loss of several weeks might not seem unduly long for such a momentous decision, the commissioner had several other treaties to conclude. Eventually, Aasagan and others yielded to the commissioner's pressure. The entire proceedings took only one week, including a day of rest on Sunday.<sup>76</sup> Ultimately, the Odawa and Ojibwe signed a treaty that ceded millions of acres to the United States and fell short in many areas: failure to pay trader debts, vaguely written land provisions, and reservation allotments in swamps. More importantly for the Anishinaabeg, however, the reservations stipulated in the treaty allowed them to remain in Michigan without further threat of removal west to Indian Territory.

## CONCLUSION

Anishinaabeg diplomacy was a dynamic process that changed over years of treaty-making with the United States. Both anticipating and responding to



American demands for land, timber, and resources, Anishinaabeg leaders reshaped negotiation over the years from 1821 to 1855. From a process dependent on ceremony, formal rhetoric, and consensus decision-making, *ogimaag* recrafted their negotiation practices to incorporate a more practical approach that better served their people's needs in a rapidly changing world. Treaty journals reveal that in the 1821 Treaty of Chicago, for example, the divide-and-conquer tactics of U.S. representatives undercut "traditional" Anishinaabeg diplomatic procedures. Similarly, the self-aggrandizing agenda of Hole-in-the-Day at the 1837 treaty of Fort Snelling vitiated any hopes of consensus reached in the older style. But it was also evident in the efforts of the *ogimaag* to be more direct in the negotiation process that they were deliberately shifting away from traditional diplomacy. By 1855, Anishinaabeg diplomats employed a negotiation style that combined older forms of rhetoric and consensus with an American business acumen that allowed them to achieve their goal of remaining on their land.<sup>77</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. Anishinaabeg may be translated as "the original people." In this paper I use *Anishinaabeg* to refer to the Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe people; we use this term in our languages to refer to ourselves. (For consistency, I do not differentiate between *Anishinaabeg*—a noun—and *Anishinaabe* as an adjective.) U.S. documents refer to the Ojibwe as "Chippewa," and many historians have used the terms interchangeably. I use the term *Ojibwe* because that is how we refer to ourselves specifically as a group within the larger identification of Anishinaabeg. See Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Hayward, WI: Red School House, 1988) and William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 56. For the sake of consistency and ease of reading, I have chosen to spell names as they are in the original texts. I have, however, elected to refer to Ashkibagaakoonzh and Bagoneyaagiizhig, respectively Flat Mouth and Hole-in-the-Day, with the English names by which the texts more commonly refer to them. I have not included translations of most other individuals' names, respecting the integrity of their given names. The majority of names are spelled using the older phonetic style, although the double-vowel system is becoming standard format.

Anishinaabeg territory in the nineteenth century covered a vast area ranging from Ontario west to the Dakotas, and from Lake Michigan north into the lands above Lake Superior. See Brian Baker, "A Nation in Two States: The Anishinaabeg in the U.S. and



Canada 1837–1991” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1996); and Janet E. Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

2. Treaties, as legal, binding contracts between two or more sovereigns, were a European creation based on a western understanding of how nation-states interacted. Representatives of political states made and signed contracts on behalf of their nations without reference to the common people’s needs or interests. Both European nations and the United States used treaties to acquire land and to establish political superiority over other nations. For a discussion of treaty-making and the history of federal policy toward American Indians, see Charles F. Wilkinson and David H. Getches, *Federal Indian Law: Cases and Materials*, 2d ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing, 1986), ch. 2. Sioux, Sauk and Fox, Menominee, Iowa, and Winnebago, as well as Anishinaabeg, participated in the 1825 Prairie du Chien Treaty council. Although I focus on Anishinaabeg strategy and tactics, it is important to note that other Indian tribes and bands participated in many of the treaty councils discussed.

3. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1750–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999); and Yasuhide Kawashima, “Forest Diplomats: The Role of Interpreters in Indian-White Relations on the Early American Frontier,” *American Indian Quarterly* 13 (1989): 1–14, are notable exceptions. See Raymond DeMallie, “Touching the Pen: Plains Indian Treaty Councils in Ethnohistorical Perspective,” *Major Problems in American Indian History* (1994): 344–355.

4. See *Commissioner of Indian Affairs Reports* for a more detailed discussion of treaty-making from the American administrators’ perspective.

5. For overviews of Indian-U.S. treaty-making, see Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Prucha, *The Great Father: The U.S. Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Charles J. Kappler, comp.; *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903); and David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).

On treaty journals see Vine Deloria, Jr. and Raymond DeMallie, *Proceedings of the Great Peace Commission of 1867–1868* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, 1975). For a discussion of Anishinaabeg language challenges and problems in translation and interpretation, see John D. Nichols, “The Translation of Key Phrases in the Treaties of 1837 and 1855,” in *Fish in the Lakes, Wild Rice, and Game in Abundance: Testimony on Behalf of Mille Lacs Ojibwe Hunting and Fishing Rights*, ed. James M. McClurken (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000).

6. Merrell and G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (London: Prentice Hall, 1995), introduction, are excellent sources on colonial negotiators both Indian and white. See also Robert A. Williams, *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600–1800* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Rebecca Kugel, *To Be the Main Leaders of Our People: A History of Minnesota Ojibwe Politics, 1825–1898* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998); and Reginald Horseman, *The Origins of Indian Removal, 1815–1824* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970).



For a discussion on treaty development see Vine Deloria, Jr., and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984). For an examination of the philosophy and practices of one of the foremost Indian agents in the Great Lakes area, see Richard G. Bremer, *Indian Agent and Wilderness Scholar: The Life of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft* (Mount Pleasant: Clarke Historical Library, 1987); James M. McClurken, "Augustin Hamlin, Jr.: Ottawa Identity and Politics of Ottawa Persistence," in *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers*, ed. James A. Clifton (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1989), 4, provides a discussion of Odawa leadership.

7. At a 1778 council in Detroit, Chaminitawaa, an Odawa chief, told British Governor Hamilton, "Father! I am chosen to speak the sentiments of the Outawaas, Chippeweys and Poutwuattamies"; "The Haldimand Papers," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (hereafter *MPHC*) 9 (1886): 442-458. For general discussions of Anishinaabeg history and culture, see Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1987); Robert E. Ritzenthaler, "Southwestern Chippewa," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger, vol. 15, *Northeast* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 743-759; Edward S. Rogers, "Southeastern Chippewa," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, 760-771; and Richard A. Rhodes and Evelyn M. Todd, "Subarctic Algonquian Languages," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. June Helm, vol. 6, *Subarctic* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), 52-66. Some mainstream scholars are not convinced of the accuracy of the migration history, for example, Charles A. Bishop, "The Historical Ojibwa Migration: Did It Happen?" (paper presented at the 33rd Algonquian Conference, Berkeley, California, 25-28 October 2001).

8. On the clan system and political strategies, see Anton Steven Treuer, "The Assassination of Hole-in-the-Day" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1997).

9. See Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 82. For discussion of decision-making processes see Mark Diedrich, *Ojibway Chiefs: Portraits of Anishinaabeg Leadership* (Rochester, MN: Coyote Books, 1999).

10. Warren, *The Mishomis Book*, 348.

11. Proceedings of the Treaty at Chicago, August 15, 1821; Documents Relating to the Negotiation of the Treaty of August 5, 1826, with the Chippewa Indians, RG 75; Documents Relating to the Negotiation of The Treaty of August 5, 1826; RG 123, Docket 27978; Journal of 1855 Treaty, July 25, 1855. For a comparison of American Indian and U.S. leadership styles, see Tracy Becker, *Traditional American Indian Leadership: A Comparison with U.S. Governance* (St. Paul: American Indian Research and Policy Institute), September 1997.

12. "Cadillac Papers: Talk Between the Different Indian Tribes at Detroit," *MPHC* 33 (1904): 190-193.

13. *Ibid.*

14. "Council held at Detroit June 14 1778 with the Ottawas, Chippeweys[,] Hurons, Poutconatlamies, Delawares, Shawanese, Miamis, Mingoes, Mohawks & the Tribes of Ouashtanon, Saguinan &c. [,] Delawarés [,] Sencas," the Haldimand Papers, *MPHC* 9 (1886): 442-452.

15. "Council held at Detroit," 14 June 1778, 442-452.

16. "Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations," 30 September-9 October 1792.

17. "Council held at Detroit," 447.



18. Ibid., 442–452. For a discussion of Anishinaabeg relations with the British, see Robert S. Allen, “His Majesty’s Indian Allies: Native Peoples, the British Crown, and the War of 1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 14 (1988): 1–24; and Colin G. Calloway, “The End of an Era: British-Indian Relations in the Great Lakes Region after the War of 1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 12 (1986): 1–20.

19. “Council held at Detroit,” 442–452.

20. Although Kugel considers this an example of an unequal relationship, others emphasize the notion of responsibility and obligation inherent in these relationships. See Janet E. Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukose: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 3–7.

21. Tribal elders had the weighty responsibility of educating the rising generation. During long winter months they used stories to instruct both the young and the mature in the protocols and philosophy of diplomacy necessary to prepare future leaders. One of the key decision-making teachings was that of patience; see Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies*, 171.

22. Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 206.

23. Ephraim S. Williams, “The Treaty of Saginaw in the Year 1819,” *MPHC* (1886): 264. Between three and four thousand Anishinaabeg attended the 1819 treaty council in Saginaw; the councils at Fond du Lac, Prairie du Chien, Chicago, and others also had thousands in attendance.

24. Ibid.

25. Proceeding of the Treaty at Chicago, August 15, 1821, Great Lakes Ohio Valley Archives, Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology, Indiana University, Bloomington.

26. Proceeding, loc. cit. The Treaty of 24 August 1816 was the first in which the Potawatomi ceded some of their own lands. In 1807 they agreed to the cession of Chippewa and Ottawa lands. Between 1816 and 1841, they signed twenty-eight treaties with the United States; see Edmunds, *The Potawatomis*, 9, 218.

27. For a provocative discussion of alcohol and treaty-making, see Bernard C. Peters, “Hypocrisy on the Great Lakes Frontier: The Use of Whiskey by the Michigan Department of Indian Affairs,” *Michigan Historical Review* 18 (1992): 1–13. The 1821 treaty council proceedings describe how, early on, the treaty council was delayed one day because the Indian people needed to recover from the effects of drinking alcohol.

28. “Proceedings of the Treaty at Chicago, August 15, 1821,” 2.

29. Ibid., 4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., 6.

32. Ibid., 10.

33. Ibid., 25.

34. In all, Taliaferro arranged ten councils between Ojibwe and Dakota over a period of seven years; ultimately, none were successful; *Niles’ National Register*, 19 November 1825, as cited in Diedrich, *Ojibway Chiefs*, 164, n6. For additional interpretations of the 1825 Prairie du Chien treaty, see also Prucha, *American Indian Treaties*, 141, and Charles A. Abele, “The Grand Indian Council and Treaty of Prairie du Chien, 1825” (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1969); Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 296.

35. Journal of the Proceedings, Treaty of August 19, 1825, RG 75, 7.



36. Ibid., 14.
37. Ibid., 20.
38. Ibid., 25.
39. Ibid.
40. Taliaferro, Journal, 30 April 1826, Lawrence Taliaferro Papers (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society), cited in Diedrich, *Ojibway Chiefs*, 165 n. 6; and Mark Diedrich, *The Chiefs Hole-in-the-Day of the Mississippi Chippewa* (Minneapolis: Coyote Books, 1986), 3–4.
41. Journal of the Proceedings, Treaty of August 19, 1825, 54.
42. Journal of a Treaty with the Chippewa, Aug 5, 1826, Fond du Lac, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Indian Tribes, 1801–69, RG-75 Records of the BIA; The National Archives, NAR Services, General Services Administration, 1960 (hereafter DRN, RG 75), 1:0825.
43. Ibid. Journal, 1. See W. B. Hinsdale, *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931), 25–33, for a discussion of Indian copper mining sites and techniques in Michigan, some dating back several thousand years. Warren, *The Mishomis Book*, 98, discusses Ojibwe use of copper in religious ceremonies, as does Bernard C. Peters, “Wa bish keep e nas and the Chippewa Reverence for Copper,” *Michigan Historical Review* 15 (1989): 47–60.
44. Ibid., 2.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., 12–14.
47. See Prucha, *American Indian Treaties*, 198, for a discussion of the Ojibwe/Dakota relationship during this period.
48. Journal of 1837 Treaty, July 29, RG 75, DRN 16, 10.
49. Ibid., 12.
50. Ibid., 17.
51. Ibid., 27.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., 30–31.
54. Ibid., 34.
55. Ibid., 35.
56. Ibid., 39.
57. Diedrich, *Ojibway Chiefs*, 58.
58. Prucha, *American Indian Treaties*, 210.
59. Ibid., 236.
60. Journal of 1855 Treaty, 25 July 1855, Proceedings of a Council with the Chippewas and Ottawas of Michigan at the city of Detroit, by the Hon. George W. Manypeny [*sic*] & Henry C. Gilbert, Commissioners of the U.S., RG 132, Docket 27978 (typescript U.S. vs. MI. M-26-73 CA). Hereafter cited as Journal of 1855 Treaty.
61. Richard White, “Ethnohistorical Report on the Grand Traverse Ottawas,” Report for the Native American Rights Fund (n.d., 1979), ch. 2, for a discussion of 1855 treaty proceedings.
62. Journal of 1855 Treaty.
63. Ibid., 1.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., 6.



66. Ibid., 4.
67. Ibid., 16.
68. Ibid., 6.
69. Ibid., 16.
70. Ibid., 1.
71. Ibid., 3.
72. Ibid., 17.
73. Ibid., 18.
74. Ibid., 12.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 24.
77. Ibid., Journal of 1855 Treaty.