In August, 1854, Commissioner of Indian Affairs George W. Manypenny directed Agent Henry C. Gilbert of Detroit to arrange a treaty council with the Chippewa Indians to extinguish their titles to certain lands at the head of Lake Superior. The agent was also to establish reservations as future homes for the Lake Superior bands living along the shores of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Gilbert, head of the Mackinac Agency which embraced all the Indians in Michigan as well as the Lake Superior Chippewa, dispatched a special messenger by way of Chicago and St. Paul to his Minnesota counterpart, Agent David B. Herriman, at Crow Wing. Gilbert asked Herriman to bring to the council ground a delegation of Mississippi River Chippewa chiefs and headmen who also claimed ownership of the lands in question. The Mackinac agent left Detroit on August 26 and arrived at La Pointe, Wisconsin, on September 1. Herriman joined him about two weeks later.

The tiny village of La Pointe on Madeline Island, offshore from Bayfield, Wisconsin, was an appropriate setting for treaty talks. La Pointe had been a focal point for white settlement on Lake Superior since the zestful days of French fur traders and missionaries. Thirteen miles long and averaging three miles wide, Madeline is the largest of the Apostle Island chain. Set against clear blue waters and skies, its rugged beauty commands admiration. Red and brown sandstone shores loom wild and bold, while pleasant farms and stately elms, pines, and cedars exude cool serenity. Before the founding of Superior, Wisconsin, and Duluth in 1853 and 1854, bustling little La Pointe, located on Madeline's southwestern tip, had been the only port of call on western Lake Superior. About 400 Canadian, mixed-blood, and native inhabitants either worked for local traders or fished for a living in the perpetually cold waters off the coast. They lived in clusters of houses along Front Street, close to the lake shore. A large pier, warehouse, and row of one-story buildings

\textsuperscript{1}George W. Manypenny to David B. Herriman, August 10, 1854, Manypenny to Henry C. Gilbert, August 11, 12, 14, 1854, Office of Indian Affairs (hereafter cited OIA), letters sent, 1824–81, National Archives Record Group (NARG) 75, National Archives microfilm publication M21, roll 49, frames 0208, 0214–0215, 0223–0224. The various microfilm rolls used for this article are in the National Archives' Federal Records Center at Chicago.

\textsuperscript{2}Gilbert to Manypenny, October 17, 1854, OIA, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Indian Tribes, 1801–69: Treaty with the Chippewa, September 30, 1854, NARG 75, microfilm publication T494, roll 5, frames 0135–0139.

Edmund J. Danziger, Jr.

Mr. Danziger, associate professor of history at Bowling Green State University, presented this paper at the seventh annual Northern Great Plains History Conference held at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in October, 1972.
had once been part of the American Fur Company complex. Other prominent La Pointe establishments included a hotel, Julius Austrian's store, and two churches.\(^8\)

The Apostle Island-Chequamegon Bay area was once the seat of Chippewa power. In the early eighteenth century, hunting parties in search of new resources emigrated to adjacent territories. Political ties atrophied, and local bands ripened into independent communities whose only sense of tribal unity came from language, kinship, and clan membership.\(^4\) Those living in permanent lakeside villages depended on fishing for subsistence; the interior bands hunted, trapped, and harvested wild rice and maple sugar. For 200 years after the arrival of the Europeans, the Chippewa economy pivoted around the fur trade.

Headmen who gathered at La Pointe in September, 1854, attested to the extent of their earlier dispersion: the L'Anse, Vieux de Sert, and Ontonagon band members had journeyed from Michigan; the La Pointe (Bad River and Buffalo's), Lac du Flambeau, and Lac Court Oreilles from Wisconsin; the Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, and the Mississippi River bands from Minnesota. Gilbert and Herriman estimated the assembled chiefs and their followers at 4,000, all of whom expected to receive food and care from Uncle Sam's commissioners.\(^6\) The 600-member L'Anse band, located at the head of Keweenaw Bay, was comparatively "civilized" at this time. Many dwelt in houses, dressed like whites, attended church and school at the Catholic mission, and farmed the land. In 1848 they had produced 3,000 bushels of potatoes and 500 of turnips, sold furs worth $2,500, salted 500 barrels of fish, and manufactured 1,400 pounds of maple sugar. The Vieux de Sert, numbering 300 to 400, had recently bought land near Keweenaw Bay and wished to unite with the L'Anse band.\(^6\) Because of the efforts of Protestant missionary Leonard H. Wheeler, many of the Bad River band living on the eastern shores of Chequamegon Bay also were adopting the white man's ways.\(^5\)

At the headwaters of the Chippewa and Wisconsin rivers lay the isolated villages of the Lac du Flambeau and Lac Court Oreilles who together numbered about 1,800 members. Traders rarely visited them. They farmed no land but, rather, eked out a meager living gathering wild rice, hunting, and selling a few furs. Although poverty-stricken, they squandered their profits on whisky. Likewise dependent on the chase and minus a school or a missionary were the nearly 400 Fond du Lac Chippewa living along the St. Louis River in Minnesota at the head of Lake Superior. On the other hand, the small Grand Portage band, which made its home at the mouth of the Pigeon River on the North Shore, had a mission station for many years and reportedly was the most "civilized" of the lake bands.\(^8\)

HISTORICAL FORCES which led to the La Pointe council in 1854 had been developing since the 1820s when the War Department first stationed an Indian agent on Madeline Island. The job of regulating Indian-white relations in the Lake Superior country became increasingly burdensome as the Chippewa, in a series of treaties, ceded their lands in southern and central Wisconsin and withdrew to the north. In October, 1842, the Lake Superior and Mississippi bands surrendered their last hunting grounds in northern Wisconsin and in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as far east as Marquette. While copper mining boomed on the South Shore during the 1840s and 1850s, various presidents of the United States permitted the Lake Superior Chippewa to remain temporarily in the ceded region in view of white farmers' lack of interest in its dank pinelands with their harsh winters and short growing season.\(^6\)

Soon, however, the War Department's Office of Indian Affairs became disenchanted with this interim arrangement and recommended removing the Chip-
pewa west of the Mississippi where they could find permanent homes and engage in farming and other "civilized" pursuits. The lake bands had other ideas. In 1849 their headmen went to Washington to solicit


Reverend Sherman Hall to S. B. Treat, December 30, 1850, enclosed in Treat to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea, February 15, 1851, OIA, letters received, Sandy Lake Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 767, frames 0259-0262.

William W. Warren to Alexander Ramsey, January 21, 1851, enclosed in Ramsey to Lea, January 28, 1851, OIA, letters received, Sandy Lake Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 767, frames 0133-0141.

"Nevertheless, in February, 1850, President Zachary Taylor ordered the Chippewa living on ceded land to be ready for removal that summer. The enforced exodus was postponed, but to lure the lake bands westward the Indian Office announced that annuities under the treaty of 1842 would be paid on October 15 at Sandy Lake, Minnesota, rather than at La Pointe. Many tribesmen insisted they had only signed the 1842 treaty so that whites could for a time dig copper on the South Shore. The Chippewa had no intentions of leaving their beloved homeland. Some bands journeyed to Sandy Lake to get supplies needed for winter. Agent John S. Watrous, unable to obtain the

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annuities in St. Louis, did not arrive at Sandy Lake until late November; by then sickness had decimated the malnourished Chippewa. When Watrous finished distributing emergency supplies on December 3, winter already had the lake country in its icy grip. Frozen watercourses forced the bands to abandon their canoes and backpack the goods home to their villages — resolved more than ever to resist removal to Minnesota.¹⁶

Nor were they without advocates. A joint resolution of the Michigan legislature in January, 1853, urged that Lake Superior Chippewa who were acculturated, voting citizens of the state not be moved to Minnesota. Later that year Agent Gilbert warned that the Indians "will sooner submit to extermination than comply" with the removal order. He advised abandoning the whole program. What the Indians wanted was title to lands near their present homes.¹⁷ In 1852 during Millard Fillmore’s administration, a Chippewa delegation to Washington convinced him to countermand the removal order.¹⁸ Plans could thus begin for the La Pointe council. But first it should be understood that these were not the only pressures brought to bear on the administration. The commissioner of Indian affairs noted that in order to get these bands to cede their rich mineral lands on Lake Superior’s North Shore, they might have to be allowed to remain on small reservations.¹⁹

Jealousy and ill will between the Lake Superior and Mississippi River bands threatened the entire council at La Pointe. The Mississippi bands would not even talk with their cousins to the east, much less agree to sell any mutually held lands. What averted a total breakdown in communications was the Indians’ strong desire that in the future the government apportion annuities between the two divisions and distribute them at separate locations. Taking advantage of this division, the commissioners asked that the bands first partition lands held in common west of Lake Superior. The Indians agreed and established their boundary at approximately the 93-degree meridian, which cuts through Minnesota just east of International Falls and west of Hibbing. Gilbert and Herriman, now able to deal separately with the lake bands, won a cession of the coveted North Shore mineral range (Article I). Article VIII affirmed that the Lake Superior Chippewa were entitled to two-thirds of the benefits of former treaties and Mississippi bands one-third.²⁰

The commissioners assented to the insistent demand of the lake Chippewa for permanent residence in their homeland. Otherwise, there simply would have been no treaty. Article II designated reservation land to be set apart for the L’Anse and Vieux de Sert, Ontonagon, La Pointe, Lac du Flambeau, Lac Court

¹⁶ Hall to Treat, December 30, 1850, enclosed in Treat to Lea, February 15, 1851, OIA, letters received, Sandy Lake Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 767, frames 0259-0262.
¹⁷ Joint resolution of the legislature of the state of Michigan, January 29, 1853, OIA, letters received, Mackinac Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 404, frames 0252-0256; Gilbert to Manypenny, December 10, 1853, M234, roll 404, frames 0184-0190.
²¹ Annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1854, 33 Congress, 2 session, Senate Executive Documents, 212-13, (serial 746).
²² Gilbert to Manypenny, October 17, 1854, OIA, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties, NARG 75, T494, roll 5, frames 0135-0139; United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1109-15. See also Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, 2:648-52 (Washington, 1904).
Oreilles, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage bands. No portion of the lands was then occupied by whites except for Wheeler’s missionary complex at Bad River.18 Article III of the La Pointe treaty gave the president the right to allot eighty-acre tracts to full-blood family heads or single adults. Also the president was free to alter reservation boundaries if circumstances warranted. “All necessary roads, highways, and railroads” received rights of way through reserved lands provided the Indians got proper compensation.19

In return for the cession of lands, Articles IV, V, and VI specified the annuities to be paid to the lake bands each year for two decades: $5,000 in coin; $8,000 in household goods; $3,000 in agricultural implements, cattle, and building materials; $3,000 for educational purposes. The United States further agreed to maintain a blacksmith and assistant on each reservation and to pay off $90,000 in Chippewa debts to traders. Article XII pledged to the impoverished tribes to traders and a similar amount in blankets, nets, guns, ammunition, and cloth. Upon selecting a reservation, the government offered them blacksmiths, smith-shop supplies, and two farmers.20

Perhaps it would be profitable at this point to pause and examine the new Chippewa reservations in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. There, it was hoped, they would earn a living by farming and become accustomed to a more sedentary way of life. Directly east of present-day Ashland, Wisconsin, lay the Bad River Reservation, roughly rectangular and encompassing slightly more than five townships. Dense forests enveloped most of these lands except for a fan-shaped northern stretch at the mouth of Bad River. Known as the Kakagan Sloughs, it consisted of twelve square miles of wild rice fields alive with fish and nesting waterfowl. A thick stand of sugar maple, elm, basswood, and ash carpeted the fertile river bottoms of the Bad, Marengo, Potato, and the White. Back from these ravines the level uplands were capable of producing crops suited to the climate. With fertile soil and fine fishing facilities, Bad River apparently could support a large Indian population.21

An executive order in 1856 added eighteen sections to the one reserved for Buffalo’s band, thereby creating the Red Cliff Reservation whose red sandstone cliffs jutted into Lake Superior at the northern tip of Bayfield County. Back from its fingernail coastline the reserve was rich in soil, timber, water, and wild fruit.22 The Lac Court Oreilles band lived in Sawyer County, southwest of Ashland, on a rolling, heavily wooded tract with many lakes. Its French name, meaning “Lake of Short Ears,” probably refers to the many bays extending inland from the main lake. In Vilas County to the east, a reserve of about the same size — approximately four townships — was assigned to the Lac du Flambeau band. More than 126 spring-fed lakes dotted its majestic cedar and spruce forests. The practice of spearing fish by torchlight explained the Indians’ name for the area: “Waus-Waug-Im-Ing,” or “Lake of Torches.”23

Five reserves lay outside Wisconsin. The treaty set apart ninety square miles at the head of Keweenaw Bay in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula for the L’Anse and Vieux de Sert bands. The well-watered soils were sufficient for vegetables adapted to the latitude. By 1855 the tract had already been surveyed and subdivided; the Indians merely awaited the allotment of farms to each family. Likewise fit for agricultural purposes was the township on Lake Superior assigned to

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18 United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1109-10.
19 United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1110.
20 United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1110-11. Since the St. Croix and Sakaagon (Mole Lake) bands were not signatories of the La Pointe treaty, they remained "lost tribes" until the 1930s when the government recognized them as Chippewa bands and set aside lands in northern Wisconsin for their use. See Levi, Chippewa Indians, 95-99.
21 Hamilton Nelson Ross, La Pointe — Village Outpost, 116-17 (St. Paul, 1960); United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1115.
22 L. H. Wheeler to Agent C. K. Drew (no month or day), 1859, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1859, 36 Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Documents, 445-47 (serial 1023); Federal Writers’ Project, Wisconsin: A Guide to the Badger State, 445 (New York, 1941). The 1854 treaty also assigned to the Bad River band 200 acres on the northern tip of Madeline Island for a fishing ground.
24 Leahy to Morgan, September 10, 1891, 52 Congress, 1 session, House Executive Documents, 466-68 (serial 2934); Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indians of the Great Lakes Agency, unpaged pamphlet [1970?].
the tiny Ontonagon band, although these Michigan Chippewa seemed bent on fishing for a livelihood.\(^26\)

Just west of Duluth and south of the St. Louis River lay the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota: five townships of rolling timberland, which, if cleared, could be cultivated. The Grand Portage Reservation, at the extreme northeast corner of Minnesota and about 150 miles from Duluth, boasted one of the most beautiful shorelines on Lake Superior. However, its rugged and stony surface offered little timber or farmland of value.\(^26\)

Article XII of the La Pointe treaty encouraged the Bois Forte band to select a reservation; but by 1866 the lands the members chose—at Vermilion Lake, some 100 miles west of Grand Portage—had not been defined, and the Indians ceded claim to them in a treaty that April. In compensation the United States laid out for the Bois Forte 107,509 forested and swampy acres at Nett Lake, forty miles northwest of Vermilion Lake and about the same distance from the Canadian boarder. The reserve, encompassing extensive wild-rice fields and blueberry marshes, could be reached from the outside world only in winter—by dog train or on snowshoes. Executive orders established two additional tracts for the Bois Forte: 1,080 acres at Vermilion Lake in December, 1881, and one township on Grand Fork River at the mouth of Deer Creek in June, 1883.\(^27\)

The Lake Superior reserves, despite their rustic beauty, posed major obstacles to Chippewa economic self-sufficiency. Woodland game resources dwindled each year along with the fur market. At first agriculture proved neither a profitable nor an appealing substitute, for the cost of clearing an acre of timberland ranged from twenty-five to thirty dollars, and the growing season was so short that only root crops grew well. Industrious white farmers could not make a good living in the northland either. The Indian Office owned no mills for grinding corn or wheat, and transportation costs to Detroit would be more than the meal and flour were worth.\(^28\) Agent I. L. Mahan's annual report for 1879 nevertheless illustrated the diverse economic activities of the Superior bands in Wisconsin and Minnesota. A partial breakdown included:

1,415 acres under cultivation
  55 bushels of wheat harvested
  70 '' onions ''
  1,339 '' corn ''
  17,375 '' potatoes ''
  890 '' oats ''
  525 '' peas ''
  230 '' beans ''
  5,175 '' turnips ''
  518 tons of hay cut
  100 melons raised
  7,900 pumpkins raised
  525 cords of wood cut
  275 gallons of syrup manufactured
  94 tons of sugar manufactured
  $22,700 of furs sold
  645 tons of wild rice gathered
  12,000 moccasins made.\(^26\)

Chippewa men who regarded farming as "squaws' work" turned instead to fishing or finding temporary employment as packers of survey equipment, graders for the railroads, wood choppers, log drivers, and deckhands on lake freighters.\(^30\) Still another source of income was annuity payments. The following figures from the 1856 congressional appropriation indicate the level of Washington's support: (1) the last of twenty installments under the treaty of July, 1837, included $6,333.33 in money, $12,666.87 in goods, $1,333.33 for provisions, and $333.33 for tobacco; (2) in accordance with the treaty of October, 1842, the fifteenth of twenty-five payments included $8,333.33 in money, $7,000 in goods, $1,333.33 for school support, and $1,333.33 for provisions and tobacco; and (3) the second of twenty installments under the treaty of September, 1854, comprised $19,000 in coin, goods, household furniture, cooking utensils, agricultural implements, cattle, tools, and building materials; $5,040 for six smiths and assistants; and $1,320 for the support

\(^{26}\) Gilbert to Manypenny, April 10, 1855, OIA, letters received, Mackinac Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 404, frames 0607–0610; Agent D. C. Leach to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole, October 17, 1863, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1863, 38 Congress, 1 session, House Executive Documents, 495 (serial 1182).

\(^{27}\) Leahy to Morgan, September 10, 1891, 52 Congress, 1 session, House Executive Documents, 469–70 (serial 2934).

\(^{28}\) Royce, Indian Land Cessions, 797, 841, 904; Leahy to Morgan, September 10, 1891, 52 Congress, 1 session, House Executive Documents, 468–69 (serial 2934); Federal Writers' Project, Minnesota: A State Guide, 346 (New York, 1938).

\(^{29}\) Agent L. E. Webb to Dole, February 6, 1862, enclosed in C. G. Wykoff to Dole, February 27, 1862, OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 392, frames 0366–0367; Webb to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Nathaniel G. Taylor, December 10, 1867, OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 394, frames 0224–0226.

\(^{30}\) Mahan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ezra A. Hayt, September 1, 1879, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1879, 46 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 269 (serial 1910).

\(^{31}\) David Day of St. Paul to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith, March 31, 1873, OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 395, frames 0034–0037.
of smith shops; and $2,000 for the second of five installments in blankets, cloths, nets, guns, and ammunition for the Bois Forte. When appropriations set by the treaty of 1854 expired in the mid-1870s, Congress continued supporting reservation schools, blacksmiths, and farmers. By 1899 the appropriation had declined to a total of $7,125, which included $1,200 for a physician.

Shortly after the annuities ceased, the Chippewa of Lake Superior generated an important new source of income. As provided in the treaty of 1854, several hundred natives had land patents for eighty-acre allotments. Washington officials restricted their use before September, 1882, but later the Interior Department granted all patentees the right to cut and sell stumpage (standing timber) from three-quarters of each allotment, leaving the remaining portion in a compact area suitable for future use as fuel and fencing materials. Patentees could also permit white crews to do the logging. During the 1883–84 season the Chippewa, with the guidance of the Office of Indian Affairs, signed eighty-eight contracts with white lumber companies, which felled over 48,000,000 feet of timber valued at more than $250,000.

Indian logging reached its peak in 1888 when 731 contracts for cutting and banking pine timber yielded 190,206,080 board feet which sold for $4.75 to $7.00 per 1,000 feet. Chippewa dependence on logging profits was painfully apparent in 1890 when the Interior Department suspended timber sales because of irregularities the previous year. Just to keep the bands alive until summer, Congress had to vote a special appropriation of $75,000.

EVENTS ON individual reservations during the late nineteenth century mirrored in more personal terms the Chippewa Indians’ difficulty in sustaining themselves by farming. Old men, sturdy women, their daughters, and small children tilled small patches at Bad River and Red Cliff; the rest of the men found work more to their liking elsewhere. Those from Bad River were paid $1.25 to $2.50 a day in Ashland and other nearby white communities. After the survey and allotment of their reservation in the mid-1870s, the Indians realized additional monies from the lumber industry. Between 1886 and 1894, for example, forest products marketed along the lines of the two railroads that crossed Bad River amounted to $400,000. Chippewa Indians from Red Cliff, besides laboring at sawmills and copper mines and as deck hands, operated a small fishing fleet which, with the use of Gill and pound nets, brought back large enough catches to sell at nearby Bayfield. The Northern Pacific Railroad and the Duluth and Winnipeg, which passed through Fond du Lac, furnished a market for Indian timber harvests. Another outlet was the flourishing town of Cloquet, Minnesota, just east of the Fond du Lac Reservation. Young men found work in logging camps, at sawmills, and with railroads, while their families gathered berries, fished, and hunted. Apparently the Michigan bands wished to farm, but the Upper Peninsula’s short growing season — sometimes with as little as sixty days between killing frosts — thwarted their efforts. Thus, they relied on hunting, fishing, berry picking, and trapping, supplemented by employment in nearby lumber camps and mines.

Most of the Grand Portage Reservation was too barren for either farming or lumbering. Since the band could not survive on federal annuities alone, some men hunted and trapped or worked as packers and guides in the remote mining districts of the United States and Canada. Their prime source of food was fishing. The Grand Portage Chippewa also had a reputation as expert sailors and boat builders. The Bois Forte, Lac Court Oreilles, and Lac du Flambeau, because of their remoteness, deviated much less from traditional Chippewa ways than their lakeside cousins. The Bois Forte at Nett Lake and Deer Creek subsisted entirely on natural resources of the land; those in the Vermilion Lake area, most of which was too swampy or stony for farming, depended on wild rice or the hunt. Some Vermilion Chippewa worked in neighboring iron mines, but the costliness of transported foodstuffs —
flour sold for $20 per 100 pounds—devaluated their real wages. Residents at Lac du Flambeau and Lac Court Oreilles engaged in a mixture of farming, logging, fishing, and hunting. The Lake Superior reserves obviously did not furnish, by themselves, an adequate living for the Indians. Nor did the Chippewas make much progress toward “civilization”—in white men’s terms. It is true that by the end of the century most tribesmen lived in log cabins, wore European-style clothes, and knew a little English, and that some 350 children attended eleven day schools and two boarding schools. Yet upon closer examination such acculturation was less real. Although most Wisconsin Chippewa lived in cabins in 1894, these one-room structures housed up to three families, with about twenty people cooking, eating, sitting, and sleeping together. Furthermore, few tribesmen lived on their allotments or farmed the year around. In the 1860s the Chippewa of Lake Superior scattered over half the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, fishing, hunting, and looking for employment in towns. Indeed, they visited the reserves only at annuity time. The tribesmen claimed their assigned tracts were either too small or uncleared and unprepared for farming. Not until 1892 could the commissioner of Indian affairs state assuredly that a majority of the Chippewas of Lake Superior were permanent reservation residents.

Another economic grievance of the Chippewa in the decades following 1854 sprang from the Indian Office’s defaulting on treaty Article IX, in which the United States agreed “that an examination shall be made, and all sums that may be found equitably due to the Indians, for arrearages of annuity or other thing, under the provisions of former treaties, shall be paid as the chiefs may direct.” In 1867 Chippewa chiefs sought authorization for a conference in Washington, D.C., to deal with Article IX and compensation due for Civil War annuities paid in devalued greenbacks rather than in specie or coin, as required by the terms of their treaties. The commissioner of Indian affairs vetoed the talks. He pointed out through the acting commissioner of Indian affairs, Hiram Price, August 31, 1882, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1882, 47 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 233-37 (serial 2100); Mahan to John Q. Smith, September 5, 1876, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1876, 44 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 552-54 (serial 1749).

Leathy to Morgan, August 29, 1892, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1892, 52 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 514 (serial 3088).

Dr. James H. Spencer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Daniel M. Browning, August 31, 1894, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1894, 53 Congress, 3 session, House Executive Documents, 395 (serial 3306).

Superintendent William J. Cullen to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Alfred B. Greenwood, August 7, 1860, OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 392, frames 0062-0064; Agent John H. Knight to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ely S. Parker, September 24, 1869, with annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs, 1869, 41 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 873-74 (serial 1414); annual report of commissioner of Indian affairs (Thomas J. Morgan), 1892, 52 Congress, 2 session, House Executive Documents, 66 (serial 3088).

United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1111.

Agent L. E. Webb to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Nathaniel G. Taylor, October 12, 1867, and Acting Commissioner Charles E. Mix to Webb, November 13, 1867, both in OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 394, frames 0199-0200 and 0242-0243, respectively.

Agent S. N. Clark to Parker, March 27, 1871, OIA, letters received, La Pointe Agency, NARG 75, M234, roll 394, frames 0873-0874.

52 Congress, 1 session, Senate Reports, no. 571, p. 1 (quote), 2-4 (serial 2913). Federal statute books for the 1890s give no indication that Congress appropriated this recommended sum.
AN ANNUITY PAYMENT was made at La Pointe in 1852.

In 1863 both the commissioner and the secretary of the interior urged a visiting Indian delegation to consolidate on one or two reserves. The chiefs and headmen presented the idea at home, but the young men refused. Pressure from Washington to concentrate the bands intensified in the early 1870s. Congress selected Bad River to receive the Chippewa from Fond du Lac, Lac Court Oreilles, and Lac du Flambeau, whose lands were unsuitable for agriculture and who were too remote for Indian Office guidance and protection from trespassing white lumbermen. When annuities expired in 1874 these bands surely would become vagrants, since white settlers and railroaders squeezed them from all sides. Wisdom dictated selling off these valuable timberlands and moving the Indians to Bad River, which was big enough to accommodate them. The La Pointe agent reported the consent of the Fond du Lac Chippewa in 1872, but on the appointed day most of the band claimed they had never agreed to relocate. When the Lac du Flambeau and Lac Court Oreilles refused to leave their homelands, the consolidation program was abandoned.

THE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES of lumbermen and whisky hucksters further undermined Indian Office efforts to improve the lot of the Lake Superior Chippewa. The alcohol problem became acute at annuity time when the Indians had money to spend. Within a day or two after the 1855 payment at La Pointe, Agent Henry C. Gilbert learned that some of the interior bands had traded all of their goods for intoxicants. He and some assistants, acting without authority, searched Madeline Island and destroyed about 1,000 bottles and twelve barrels of liquor. On the night of September 15, 1863, after the distribution of annuities at Fond du Lac, many Chippewa Indians became drunk, and in a fight three were killed, including a chief. Not only did the Indian agents have difficulty getting evidence against the white suppliers but neighboring townsmen refused to enforce the whisky laws by prosecuting them.

These quick profits snatched up by wolfish white lumbermen and liquor dealers were but scraps in comparison with the savory mineral and timber bonanzas served up by the treaty. Interest in North Shore
mining dated from 1826 when Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory, and Thomas L. McKenney, head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, persuaded the Chippewa bands to accept the federal government’s right to search for and carry away metals and minerals from Indian lands. United States Geologist David Dale Owen’s extensive survey of northern Minnesota, published in 1852, made several references to iron ore deposits. Moreover, it was hoped that the miners’ treaty of 1854 (as many called it) would duplicate on the American North Shore of Lake Superior a copper boom similar to that on the south, which by the mid-1850s produced nearly 6,000,000 pounds of copper annually. Impatient miners flocked to the young town of Superior before President Pierce’s proclamation of the treaty, but no major copper rushes occurred. In fact, when a Vermilion Lake gold craze fizzled in the summer of 1866, interest in Minnesota’s iron-rich northeast triangle waned until entrepreneurs and railroaders opened the Vermilion and Mesabi ranges twenty years later. Production on the giant Mesabi alone has since yielded massive amounts of ore — 2,484,854,372 tons by 1960.

The treaty of 1854 also unwittingly unlocked a treasure in federal timberlands. The seventh clause of the second article provided, as was common in such agreements, that:

“Each head of a family or single person over twenty-one years of age at the present time of the mixed bloods, belonging to the Chippewas of Lake Superior, shall be entitled to eighty acres of land, to be selected by them under the direction of the President, and which shall be secured to them by patent in the usual form.”

By the close of 1856 Agent Gilbert had issued to 312 mixed-bloods land certificates which contained a clause forbidding their sale, transfer, or mortgage. This should have ended Washington’s obligation to the Chippewa half-breeds. Instead, it was but the prelude for a lurid tale of thievery and deceit. In 1863 the

* United States, Statutes at Large, 7:290–95; Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota: A History of the State, 360–61 (Minneapolis, 1963); Rickard, American Mining, 231.
* Grace Lee Nute, Lake Superior, 295–96 (New York, 1944); Federal Writers’ Project, Minnesota, 95–96; Blegen, Minnesota, 374.
* United States, Statutes at Large, 10:1110.
commissioner of Indian affairs threw open the lands ceded at La Pointe to white scalawags by ruling that mixed-blood scrip applicants need not have lived among the Chippewa of Lake Superior at the time of the treaty. Rationalizing that since all Chippewa were related (thereby all were Chippewa of Lake Superior), organizations at La Pointe and St. Paul ferreted out mixed-bloods as far away as the Red River of the North and induced them to apply for government scrip. By the mid-1860s the Interior Department had approved 565 such requests. Indian applicants subsequently executed powers of attorney to white speculators who were free to receive and locate the tracts as well as strip them of valuable pine timber. Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano appointed a special commission in 1871 to investigate these swindles. Its report exposed a shockingly large number of fraudulent applications made by whites posing as Chippewa, by Indians applying more than once, by deceased half-breeds, and by husbands and wives each claiming headship for the same family. The commission recommended cancellation of the illegally obtained scrip. Further investigation revealed that, except for the original Gilbert certificates and forty-five other grants, the rest were so tainted by fraud as to be of no value.

Clearly the treaty of 1854 played a vital role in the economic development of western Lake Superior. It secured North Shore mineral resources, opened valuable pine timberland, and, by not displacing the native inhabitants along its shores, preserved an important labor supply for lumbering firms, lake shippers, miners, and railroad construction companies. Although not apparent for several decades, the 1854 agreement was also the most pivotal event in the history of the lake Chippewa Indians following the coming of the white man. Henceforth they must walk a new road—to cultural disintegration and crushing poverty. Yet, after touching their pens to the La Pointe treaty, the chiefs and headmen had some cause for optimism; unlike so many uprooted cousins to the west, the Lake Superior bands retained a portion of their homeland and were free to pursue their traditional hunting-fishing-trapping-gathering economy. Most native families did not even reside on their reservations the year around until the turn of the century. Furthermore, the white man’s agricultural program for them as set forth in the treaty floundered on the rocks of cultural intransigence and geographic realities. Eventually the 1854 time bomb exploded in the Indians’ faces. Game and government annuities had run out by the dawn of the twentieth century. Soon the land of their fathers would lie barren, largely denuded of trees, and employment opportunities would dwindle badly. Huddled in shabby shacks, racked with disease, victimized by “demon rum,” the Chippewa underwent a complete transformation from proud woodland warriors to welfare recipients.

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THE PHOTOGRAPH of Gilbert on page 178 is published through the courtesy of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. The engraving on page 183 is from Benjamin G. Armstrong, Early Life Among the Indians: Reminiscences (Ashland, Wisconsin, 1892). The photograph of Chief Buffalo is published through the courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The engraving of La Pointe is from David Dale Owen, Report of a Geological Survey of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota (Philadelphia, 1852). The map is by Alan Ominsky.