

# No hostilities were reported Whites settled in Lake County

For some reason, probably bigotry and the desire to own more and more land, the white man eliminated the Indian from northern Illinois and what is now Lake County by a treaty in August, 1829.

Indians had never believed in the ownership of land, and they did not realize that deeding it to the government would mean the fencing of their hunting grounds.

The southern and central portions of Illinois were becoming filled with people, but the extreme northern part stood vacant of settlements, being occupied by several tribes of Indians. So strong, however, was the demand for more land, augmented by men who had an axe to grind, that the federal government was obliged to yield to it, and in August, 1829, negotiated a treaty at Prairie du Chien, Wis., by which it acquired title to all the remaining Indian lands within the state.

The Chippewas, Ottawas and Potawatomes sold out, though it was stipulated by the Potawatomes, who occupied Lake County, they should have sole use of the land up to Feb., 1, 1835, with the privilege of remaining, if they chose, up to August 1, 1836. While the year 1835 marks the first settlement of the white man in Lake County, it was long the habitat of their predecessors, the Indians. Their occupancy dates back several thousand years, some students claiming 6,000 years, while others feel it may be three times that long ago.

Lake County was occupied by at least five different language families, with totally distinct customs. Among them were the Ottawas, Chippewas, Illinois, Kickappos, Weas, Miamis, Potawatomes, Mascoutens, Sacs, Foxes, Hurons, Winnebagoes, Sioux and Iroquois. Indian graveyards have been uncovered on Point Comfort hill in Fox Lake elsewhere indicating that the area was once inhabited by a prehistoric race of "Mound Builders." Skeletons have been exhumed of men more than seven feet tall.

The first white man to have visited what is now the Chain O' Lakes seems to have been the Quebec trader — explorer Jean Nicolet, who in about 1635, contacted the Potawatomic Indians. He came by canoe, via Mackinac, Green Bay and the Fox River.

Next visitor of record was Claude Jean Allouez, "The Apostle of The West," who sought to bring Christianity to the Indians between 1648 and 1669.

Explorers LaSalle and Tonty paddled the Chain O' Lakes in the 1680's and reported on the abundance of wild rice growing there. Game and fish were plentiful and the fields were fertile.

The Potawatomes, moving southward from the Green Bay area, drove out the weaker tribes and established several villages in the area. Crab Appie Island on Fox Lake was a large cornfield, it was so rich in game, particularly in foxes, that by one account this is what gave Fox Lake its name. Another account credits the origin of the name to the pre — Potawatomic inhabitants, an Algonquin tribe called "Fox" by the French, presumably because one of its clans had the fox as its totem. They called themselves the Muskwaki, or "red earth people" and for mutual protection merged with the Sac tribe.



Before the treaty between the Indians and the federal government, which made settlement lawful for the white man, adventurous pioneers had staked out homesteads on land that they liked starting usually with frontage on navigable water. Relations between the early settlers and the departing Indians seem to have been uneventful, even though the Indians had learned to use firearms. There is no record of any serious violence against the white settler from the Indians on what is now Lake County even though the white man was encroaching upon the land of the Indians.

One Fox Lake Grade School boy wrote years ago: "Even though the whites were trespassing, there is no record of any serious violence having befallen a pioneer or his family during this period. My great — great — great aunt, Martha Sheehan, who was born in a home where the high school now stands, often told me of Indians hunting on their farm or stopping for water.

This was about the time of the Civil War and she said there were still many Indians around them, but they were very friendly."

In her "Journal" Mary Elizabeth Story Howard reveals that her family encountered Indians when they first lived in the Antioch area, which was in the 1840's. The Indians would kill a deer, skin it, and leave the hind quarters in front of the cabin for the settlers to eat.

The Illinors were peaceful Indians who lived by farming, fishing and hunting. The area they controlled is thought to have included all of northeastern Illinois. As early as 1660, however, the fierce and vigorous Iroquois chased their enemies, the Hurons and Wyandots, across the land of the Illinois. The warlike Iroquois came all the way from New York in pursuit of their enemies, and they didn't hesitate to pick a fight with the Illinois either. In 1680, soon after explorers LaSalle and Tonty arrived in the area, a party of Iroquois warriors ransacked the great Illinois River settlement and began the period of decline of the Illinois Indians which ended in the massacre at Starved Rock in 1770.

During the first half of the 18th Century the Illinois were still found throughout central and southern Illinois, but they were beleaguered by the Iroquois on the east and the Sioux on the west. Another tribe from the west, the Miamis, moved into the area around Chicago and northern Illinois around 1690, where they remained for about 20 years holding off the Iroquois and other invading tribes, including the Sioux. Some of the favorite hunting grounds of the Miamis included the area of what is now Lake County.

The Miamis were more warlike than their cousins, the Illinois, and they not only secured the area of northern Illinois, but also moved eastward into Indiana and Ohio. They left the western shore of Lake Michigan in 1720. The great Ottawa Chief Pontiac was assassinated in 1769 by a member of the Kaskaskian tribe, which was a smaller subdivision of the Illinois. The Ottawas and the Potawatomis, who revered Pontiac, took revenge on the Illinois Indians at Starved Rock, where a bloody massacre exterminated all but 11 of the Illinois.

It is from the year 1770 that the occupation and control of the Illinois territory by the Potawatomis is usually dated. The proud and haughty Potwawtomis had been entrenched in the Green Bay area in the latter 1600's, but like others, they roamed far and wide. In 1763 the Potawatomis were large and strong enough to send a 450 — man delegation to the Algonquin Council in Niagara Falls.

Potawatomis of the Illinois territory adopted a somewhat different way of life than their parent tribes from Michigan and Indiana. The Potawatomis of this area became known as the prairie band, as opposed to the woodland Indians. They despised the tilling of the soil and wouldn't even permit their women to farm. Instead the Potawatomis led a somewhat nomadic existence, moving from hunting ground to hunting ground and setting up tepee villages.