

## Michigan Indians Battle Against Removal

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In 1853 after Indian removal in the United States had reached its peak, the Indian Commissioner reported that of the 400,000 Indians that were east of the Mississippi before the beginning of removal, only 18,000 remained. The rest had been taken to the lands of Kansas and Iowa and from there, some went to Oklahoma. Those remaining were scattered in New York, Florida, North Carolina, Mississippi, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The largest numbers of Indians remaining were in the last three states mentioned; about one third were in Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

Removal as a policy was mentioned as early as 1803.

1. U. S., Department of the Interior. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, 1854, Senate Ex. Doc. 1, p. 243.

Thomas Jefferson, in completing the Louisiana Purchase, suggested a detailed procedure for removing the Indians east of the Mississippi to the Louisiana Territory. This was the first official advocacy of such a policy.<sup>2</sup> The idea, however, gained little attention until after the War of 1812 when a larger number of settlers began moving west of the Appalachians. Having seen many Indians fighting on the British side may have hardened determination to remove them. Stronger now, the United States also did not have to consider British attitudes as much in dealing with the Indians.<sup>3</sup>

It was not until Andrew Jackson became President, however, that much removal actually got underway. It was a campaign issue in 1828 and very early in his term, May 28, 1830, he obtained the Indian Removal Act. This allowed the President to grant land west of the Mississippi River to Indians who wished to remove. The lands were mainly modern Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri, and the Indians were to gain land equal in quality to theirs back home. The government was to provide them subsistence until they were advanced enough in agriculture. The policy ostensibly was voluntary, but in practice there was often dishonesty and the bribe of whiskey.<sup>4</sup>

The rationale behind removal was to isolate the Indians from white men and their liquor so the Indians would have a chance to become civilized. While there were some humanitarian missionaries who felt this was the Indians' only hope, Jackson's own sentiments probably come closer to the truth:

What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which Art can devise or

2. Annie Abel, "History of Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association 1906* (2 vols.; Washington: American Historical Ass'n, 1908), I, 241-42.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 277, and Dale Van Every, *Disinherited: The Lost Birthright of the American Indian* (New York: Morrow, 1966), pp. 19, 106.

4. Van Every, *Disinherited*, pp. 103, 117.

industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion.<sup>5</sup>

It is impossible to determine the attitude of the American people toward this policy but it seemed sectional, south and west. There was a struggle against the bill in Congress and it passed by only a few votes. The opposition came from missionary groups and New England Congressmen.

Another aspect of removal particularly pertinent to the Indians of Michigan was the evolution of a policy which will be called the "Northern Removal Policy."<sup>6</sup> Instead of removing the Indians of Michigan and other Midwest Indians to the Kansas area, there was a tendency on the part of government officials to speak in terms of removing to present-day northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. The climate and terrain was judged to be better for the Indians. The closeness of the area would lessen the expense of removal. The northern location, hopefully, would be more attractive to the Indians.<sup>7</sup> The latter was especially important since the Michigan Indians objected to the plains. Indeed, it would have been a drastic switch as Walter Laurie, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, later remarked:

They have been engaged all their lives catching fish, in making sugar from the maple trees, and in living in the forest; and they cannot think of going where none of these are.<sup>8</sup>

5. James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1908* (11 vols.; Washington: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1909), II, 522.

6. Officials in the government did not use this expression. It is simply a term used by the author to refer to the plan of removing certain Indians north rather than west of the Mississippi.

7. James Monroe, Message to Congress, January 27, 1825, as quoted by Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (6 vols.; Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1852-55), VI, 409-10; and Willis Dunbar, *Michigan, A History of the Wolverine State* (Grand Rapids: Ferdinans, 1965), p. 41.

8. Walter Laurie to Luke Lea, New York, June 30, 1851, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Northern Superintendency, 1851-1860, NA microcopy 234, Reel 598, pp. 14-15. NA refers to National Archives.

There was vacillation, however, in solidifying this Northern Removal Policy. One problem was that the government needed to gain the land from the Indians of Wisconsin and Minnesota. There was also a problem of Hudson Bay Company people selling liquor in the area. Then there was the fear that the Indians would return home since it was so close. The Sioux and the Chippewa, moreover, were life-long enemies, and it was dangerous to put them close together.<sup>9</sup> Discussion seemed to drag on and on, and the effect on the Michigan Indians, as will be seen, was quite upsetting. Discussion went on so long without the question being answered that by 1849 Minnesota Territory was asking to be admitted as a state and was objecting to removing more Indians to their land.<sup>10</sup> The other reasons mentioned before were still present, and Northern Removal was finally abandoned along with the general removal policy itself.

In a series of treaties from 1833 to 1837, various Michigan Indians were requested to remove. Out of a population of 7,600-8,300, only 651 Indians were ever removed. Most were Potawatomi in southern Michigan; some were Chippewa and possibly a few Ottawa.<sup>11</sup> The remainder struggled to stay.

The united band of Ottawa and Chippewa numbered about 5,000 and ranged from the banks of the Grand River to the Chocolate River of the Upper Peninsula. Some were quite advanced in agriculture and well educated. The most educated was the L'Arbre Croche band described by an

9. Henry Schoolcraft to Carey Harris, Detroit, December 20, 1836, in *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1836-37*, NA microcopy 234, Reel 422, p. 293; Schoolcraft to Lewis Cass, Washington, March 30, 1836, *Ratified Treaties 1833-37*, NA microcopy 494, Reel 3, p. 363; and Schoolcraft, *History of the Indian Tribes*, II, 550-57.

10. U. S., Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 1850, Senate Ex. Doc. 1, p. 943.

11. For specific information and numerous citations of population statistics, see Elizabeth Neumeyer, "Indian Removal in Michigan, 1833-1855" (unpublished Master's thesis, Central Michigan University, 1968), pp. 30, 33, 40, 46, 54, 73, and 92.

attorney as the "most intelligent Indians I ever saw; well dressed like the whites—some of them far better than many whites of the upper country."<sup>12</sup>

In December of 1835 the united Ottawa and Chippewa sent a memorial to Lewis Cass, then Secretary of War, explaining their willingness to sell some of their land but without having to commit themselves to removal:

It is a heartrending thought to our simple feelings to think of leaving our native country forever, the land where our forefathers lay thick in the earth.<sup>13</sup>

Early in the next year another petition, this time to the President, came from the Ottawa on Grand River. They were more emphatic:

You know we obtained our land from the Great Spirit. He made it for us who are Indians. When we die, we expect to rest on this land. . . . We have not a mind to remove to a distant land.<sup>14</sup>

Two months later, on March 28, 1836, in the Treaty of Washington, these Ottawa and Chippewa ceded to the United States an area from the Grand River to the Chocolate River. In return they reserved the right of five-year residency on various reservations unless the United States decided to allow them to remain longer. The Thirteenth Article embodied this provision:

The Indians stipulate for the right of hunting on the lands ceded, with the other usual privileges of occupancy, until the land is required for settlement.<sup>15</sup>

12. Remarks of Charles H. Stewart included in Schoolcraft's Annual Report of 1837, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1842-45, NA microcopy 234, Reel 425, p. 110.
13. Augustin Hamelin to Lewis Cass, Washington, December 5, 1835, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1832-35, NA microcopy 234, Reel 421, p. 724.
14. Petition of Ottawa to Andrew Jackson, Rapids of Grand River, January 27, 1836, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1836-37, NA microcopy 234, Reel 422, p. 146.
15. Charles J. Kappler (ed.), *Indian Affairs: Law and Treaties* (2 vols.; Washington: 1904), II, 451-54.

According to Henry Schoolcraft, this treaty did not bind the Indians to "any actual engagement to remove west." The Indians were reluctant to sign but yielded when Schoolcraft pointed out to them the "practical operation" of the Thirteenth Article.<sup>16</sup> White men's influence was present, according to Baptist missionary, Isaac McCoy:

It was pretty soon discovered that a design existed among them [no names mentioned] who would have much influence in fixing the terms of the treaty, to induce them [the Indians] to sell so much of the country as to secure large amounts of money and . . . then keep them still in Michigan.<sup>17</sup>

In 1838 a delegation of chiefs from various groups of Ottawa and Chippewa bands were sent west to choose a home if they should remove. Henry Schoolcraft was not very optimistic about their reaction. On June 28, a party of twenty-four Indians was organized; nine from Grand River, seven from L'Arbre Croche, one from Manistee, and seven from Mackinac. Indians from the Sault area refused to send anybody and tersely related why: "We do not wish to go West: we object to it entirely: this is all we have to say."<sup>18</sup>

Once the delegation saw the prairie land, they did not react too unfavorably and chose some land. James Schoolcraft, who led the expedition, felt they still would not remove. His feeling was correct, as the various bands refused to acknowledge the opinion of the delegation and intensified an active campaign to gain permission to remain in Michigan.<sup>19</sup>

Hoping to avoid removal, the Indians resorted to various methods. Some Indians, such as those at L'Arbre Croche

16. Schoolcraft to Cass, Michilimackinac, July 18, 1836, in Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Treaties, 1833-37, NA microcopy 494, Reel 3, p. 369. The Senate amended the treaty to put in a specific five year provision and it was this that the Indians objected to.

17. Isaac McCoy, *History of the Baptist Indian Missions* (New York: W. M. Morrison, 1840), p. 494.

18. Journal of James Schoolcraft, May 15, 1838, to August 27, 1838, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency, 1828-80, NA microcopy 234, Reel 415, pp. 612, 617, 620, 624-25.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 641, 655-56.

and Grand River, saved annuity money to purchase land. Some of these people were aided later by a group called the Western Society to Benefit the Indians, a group formed in 1838 to help Ottawa who wanted to farm, be educated, and become citizens.<sup>20</sup> Others took a different approach and fled to the Manitoulin Islands in Canada. Schoolcraft predicted most Indians would go there if removal became imminent. Indeed, by 1840, 263 Ottawa and Chippewa had gone.<sup>21</sup>

Alvan Coe, a Congregationalist minister, circulated a petition among the Indians near Mackinac in 1841 which then went to the Department of War. A curt reply was received saying the government had not yet decided what to do. When they did, the Indians would be notified.<sup>22</sup>

The problem with such ambivalence was that it upset those Indians who wanted to improve. They had little guarantee in regard to removal and stood to lose anything they might build up in land and improvements. Coe then went directly to Washington and saw John Bell, Secretary of War, and was told the government was contemplating removal to the north. John Quincy Adams, then a Representative, felt that "Congress might permit the Indians to remain." William Woodbridge, then Senator from Michigan, felt the "Indians ought to have a few days of grace." Later Coe's plea was also presented to President Tyler but apparently received no assurance from him.<sup>23</sup>

20. Harvey Hyde to Robert Stuart, Allegan, January 8, 1842, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1842-45, NA microcopy 234, Reel 425, p. 72.

21. U. S., Department of War, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 25th Congress, 3rd Session, 1839, Senate Doc. 1, p. 487; and Augustus Hamelin and William Johnson to Joel Poinsett, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1840, NA microcopy 1, Reel 49, p. 177.

22. T. Hartley Crawford to James Schoolcraft, Washington, June 15, 1841, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1841, NA microcopy 1, Reel 50, p. 531.

23. Alvan Coe to John Bell, Washington, June 23, 1841; Coe to Crawford, June 24, 1841; Coe to Bell, Washington, June 24, 1841; Coe to John Tyler, Mackinac, October 27, 1841, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1840-41, NA microcopy 234, Reel 424, pp. 686-90, 695-96.

William Brockway, Methodist missionary, accepting Coe's sincerity, had signed the above petition, but had commented:

Those who are the most anxious for the Indian to remain permanently in the country are those who expect to reap something from them, and the greatest philanthropists (at least in word) are those who have the most whiskey to sell to them.<sup>24</sup>

This was indeed a problem because when Indians received treaty annuity payments, the traders were always there. For example, the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* had several articles denouncing the game of "grab" in which the traders grabbed the Indians' money in return for whiskey and inferior goods.<sup>25</sup> This trade was somewhat profitable. A common recipe for Indian whiskey was related by the well-known Ottawa, Simon Pokagon. The traders, he reported, took thirty gallons of water to which was added two gallons of whiskey, enough red pepper to make it fiery, and tobacco. The cost of making it was \$1.60 but it was sold to the Indians at fifteen cents a quart for a \$62.40 profit.<sup>26</sup>

It would be a mistake to assume all traders were this way or that the Indians remained in Michigan solely because of a few greedy traders. The Indians themselves were adamant. When Robert Stuart replaced Schoolcraft as Michigan Indian Superintendent, he attempted to gain a concrete answer from the government and indicated the Indians would never go west without force. Their land was not settled by whites, they were improving, and many citizens wished them to remain. But again no positive answer.<sup>27</sup> Chief Ahgosa described the Indians' predicament

24. William Brockway to Stuart, Sault Ste. Marie, May 31, 1841, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1841, NA microcopy 1, Reel 50, pp. 357-58.

25. *Grand Rapids Enquirer*, October 26 and November 2, 1841.

26. Simon Pokagon, *Queen of the Woods* (Hartford: C. H. Engle, 1901), p. 107.

27. Stuart to Crawford, Detroit, June 25, 1841, and October 18, 1841, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, 1839-42, NA microcopy 1, Reel 38, pp. 511 and 577, and U. S. Department of War, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, 1842, Senate Doc. 1, pp. 345-46.



quite poignantly: "They hold on to this place as a bird clings to a tree ready to fall."<sup>28</sup>

In 1841 citizens of Mackinac formed a committee to present petitions of the Ottawa and Chippewa to the government. Reuben Turner, as chairman, traveled to the different bands and conducted a rough survey of Indian opinion. From this emerged a list of Indian objections. They did not like the terrain of the West; they were afraid of the Western Indians; and they did not wish to abandon their ancestors' burial grounds. Many indicated they would go to Canada.<sup>29</sup> Turner's petition embodying these reasons was forwarded to Canada, whose Secretary of War in turn sent it to John Crawford, Indian Commissioner. Crawford said he knew of no immediate orders to remove but that the northern removal project was still being considered:

If this view [northern removal] is correct, no assurance can be given of any positive permission to remain where they are, for a greater or less period, but only that they will not be for the present disturbed . . . or until the issue of pending measures shall enable the Department to determine finally what ought to be done.<sup>30</sup>

In 1843 the Ottawa and Chippewa petitioned the President and the Michigan legislature. Their basic argument against removal was that the white man did not want their land anyhow. The legislature responded favorably, unanimously instructing the Michigan Representatives and Senators to Congress to use their influence in fighting removal.<sup>31</sup>

28. Peter Dougherty to Messrs. Biddle and Drew, Grand Traverse, February 15, 1841, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1841, NA microcopy 1, Reel 50, p. 75.

29. Reuben Turner to Stuart, Mackinac, June 23, 1841, in Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1841 NA microcopy 1, Reel 50, pp. 601-4.

30. Crawford to Bell, [Washington], July 27, 1841, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1842-45, NA microcopy 234, Reel 425, p. 231.

31. Indian Memorial [John Tyler] in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1842-45, NA microcopy 234, Reel 425, pp. 569, 595-98, and U. S., Department of War, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 28th Congress, 1st Session, 1844, p. 311.

It was never clear from the records whether the government was just paying lip service to removal in northern Michigan. The ambivalence is clear and it was damaging to the morale of the Indian. An unsigned note on an envelope in the Office of Indian Affairs Records in 1845 affords a clue:

The Department has taken no measures to prepare for their [the Indians] removal—which is as strong an expression of permission to remain as the government could give—the people of Michigan do not desire their removal . . . I do not think [illegible word] is at liberty to take any steps that could or might result in the removal of these people.<sup>32</sup>

The story from 1846 to 1855 changes little. The period is characterized by a series of petitions from the Indians, and their missionaries, and from Indian agents asking for a definite statement on removal. Finally in 1851, the United States government ordered Elias Murray, Head of the Northern Superintendency, to visit the Michigan Indians and determine the need, if any, for removal. His son did this in August of 1851. He went to principal places of settlement such as the Cheboygan River area, Little Traverse Bay, Grand Traverse Bay, Wing River, and Grand River. After reviewing his son's report, Murray stated:

I am well satisfied that public sentiment in Michigan is in accordance with the wishes of the Indians as reported. I therefore respectfully recommend that these Indians be permitted to . . . remain.<sup>33</sup>

As a result of this report, the Indian Commissioner recommended that Congress make an appropriation so that the Office of Indian Affairs could take the necessary measures for the Indians' permanent settlement in Michigan.<sup>34</sup>

32. Note on envelope of letter in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1842-45, NA microcopy 234, Reel 425, p. 707.

33. Elias Murray to Lea, September 21, 1851, La Pointe, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Northern Superintendency, 1851-60, NA microcopy 234, Reel 598, pp. 41-42, and Lea to [Fillmore], [Washington], August 30, 1852, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency, 1839-52, NA microcopy 234, Reel 403, p. 706.

34. U. S., Department of Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 32nd Congress, 1st Session, 1852, Senate Ex. Doc. 1, p. 267.

It might be pointed out here that the West was being settled faster than northern Michigan—a point the Indians themselves often made in petitions.

In the treaty of July 31, 1855, the Chippewa and Ottawa were assured that they could not be removed.<sup>35</sup> They had won their battle.

During this same period of time the Chippewa of the Superior also struggled to remain. These Indians included the Chippewa in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. Michigan had about 600-700 of them. Schoolcraft felt, in 1838, that they were not affected by white intrusion but should be informed of removal regardless. His main concern was the feeling that these bands were more loyal to England than to the United States.<sup>36</sup>

As early as 1838 some of these Indians let it be known that they wanted to cede land to receive more annuities. A treaty was finally negotiated in 1842 in which removal was incorporated but with no time period specified; only the general stipulation "at the pleasure of the President."<sup>37</sup> There did not seem to be any great necessity to remove them, and some officials such as the La Pointe agent, Alfred Brunson, felt they would face a frontier war.<sup>38</sup> This would be expensive and might keep back the opening of the mineral lands in the Upper Peninsula. In response to a Senate request for information, the Indian Commissioner felt the Indians would be no problem to mining if left alone.<sup>39</sup> As was later evident, miners "on a drunken spree" were more dangerous than the Indians.<sup>40</sup>

35. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, II, 725-31.

36. 1839 *Commissioners Report*, p. 487.

37. Crawford to Stuart, Washington, August 1, 1842, in *Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1842*, NA microcopy 1, Reel 53, pp. 174-75; Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, II, 542.

38. Alfred Brunson to J. D. Doty, La Pointe Agency, January 6, 1843, in *Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1842-43*, NA microcopy 1, Reel 54, p. 516.

39. *Message From the President of the United States Communicating in Compliance with a Resolution of the Senate Information in Relation to the Removal of the Chippewa Indians from the Mineral Lands of Lake Superior*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, 1846, Senate Doc. 403, pp. 2-3.

40. F. Clever Bald, *Michigan in Four Centuries* (2nd ed., New York: Harper, 1954), p. 234.

INDIANS TO BE REMOVED FROM LAKE SUPERIOR.

*This report, from 1850,  
proved to be false.*

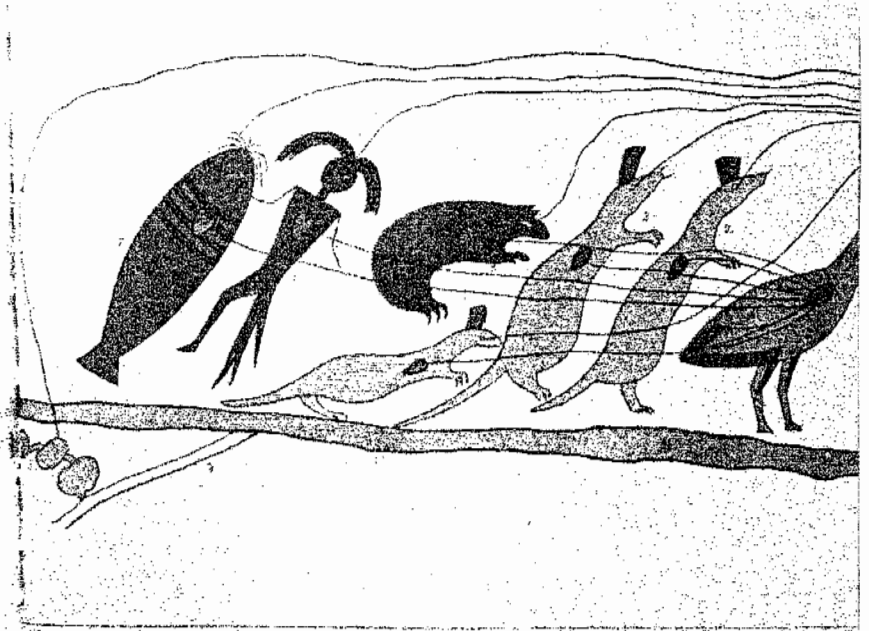
We learn from J. S. Watrous Esq., newly appointed Indian Agent for La Pointe, now on his way to enter upon the duties of his office, that there will be no more Payments made at that place, and that the Indians of Lake Superior above this place will receive their next annuities at some point on the Mississippi, not yet determined upon. We understand that Gov. Ramsey, of Minnesota, and Mr. Watrous are authorized to select a place for the future payments. Mr. W. has along with him the boxes, with which to pay off the Government Officers connected with the La Pointe Agency, which will be removed to the new Indian rendezvous, soon as it has been determined upon. The Indians must follow as a matter of course or lose their annuities. This is a new and ingeniously contrived way of effecting the removal of the natives.

The Chippewa of the Lake found the same uncertainty as indicated before. Removal was at the discretion of the President and they did not know where they stood. In February of 1849, six chiefs from the Ontonagon area along with others from Wisconsin met with the President and were told they would be treated well. This was not the answer they wished.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, in the Indian Commissioner's report of 1849 it was announced that removal would come soon.<sup>42</sup> The Indians from Ontonagon, L'Anse, and

41. *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1848, February 19, 1849. Schoolcraft illustrated in its original pictographic form a petition which apparently was the one presented by this group; *History of Indian Tribes*, I, 416-21.
42. U. S., Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 1850, Senate Ex. Doc. 1, p. 948.
43. David Aitken to Charles Babcock, Sault Ste. Marie, October 28, 1850, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, 1846-51, NA microcopy 234, Reel 426, pp. 610-11.
44. *Lake Superior Mining Journal*, June 12, 1850.
45. [?] Sherman to Lea, Mackinac, March 23, 1853, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency, 1853-55, NA microcopy 234, Reel 404, pp. 252-56.
46. Henry Gilbert to George Manypenny, Mackinac, December 10, 1853, in *ibid.*, pp. 185-87.
47. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, II, 649-50.

Vieux Desert again petitioned to stay.<sup>43</sup> The editor of the *Lake Superior Mining Journal*, J. Venen Brown, circulated a petition in the summer of 1850. He bluntly said the removal was "uncalled for."<sup>44</sup> The Michigan legislature also in March of 1850 passed a resolution asking that the Indians be left alone.<sup>45</sup> The Indians told agent Henry Gilbert that at the 1842 treaty negotiations, commissioners had told them the removal provision was only form and would never be carried out. Gilbert found eyewitnesses, such as an interpreter, who verified this.<sup>46</sup> The government then eventually abandoned the whole idea as they would with the united Ottawa and Chippewa. In the Treaty of September 30, 1854, at La Pointe, Wisconsin, the Chippewa of the Lake were granted the right to remain in Michigan.<sup>47</sup>

There were four general factors that operated to keep the Indians in Michigan. First, there was the fight of the Indians themselves to remove. The stereotype of the Indian as apathic was hardly true here. This was assisted by the fact that few farmers wanted land in northern Michigan. It is



SYMBOLIC PETITION OF CHIPPEWA CHIEFS.

important to note that the only Indians removed were Potawatomi in southern Michigan where the population was larger.<sup>48</sup> Thanks to the government's vacillation, the West was eventually settled faster, so particularly, after the mid-1840s. A third factor was that to some people, the Indians were a financial asset. Fourth, there was a feeling of magnanimity toward the Indians on the part of many Michigan citizens. Other factors such as the growing slavery problem and the Indians being on the frontier may also have helped.

Thus the Indians remained and Michigan today has a large Indian population. Many of these people have been assimilated; others are in the process. Too many live in inadequate housing and are treated as second-class citizens. Currently they are organized to rectify this and regain their proud heritage. Hopefully, Michigan Indians will someday be able to agree with one of their ancestors' comments when the Indians were assured they would not be removed:

The morning has come again and the bright sun shows us the clear sky with no clouds . . . so are we in our hearts and in our minds clear and of good courage.<sup>49</sup>

48. For a good summary, and printed letters regarding the Potawatomi removal from Michigan, see Irving McKee, *The Trail of Death: Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1941).

49. Ottawa and Chippewa to Manypenny, Washington, February 28, 1855, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency, 1853-55, NA microcopy 234, Reel 404, p. 554.