

Source: Charles C. Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions in the United States*, part 2, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1896-97* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), plate 126.

Land cessions to the United States



2007 Student Essay Prize Winner

## The Road to Ruin? “Civilization” and the Origins of a “Michigan Road Band” of Potawatomi

by  
Ben Secunda

A road can be a very boring thing, until someone wants to build one across your land. Today road building often evokes heated debates over property, commerce, traffic, tradition, and even race and culture. In this regard, little has changed since 1826. The Michigan Road cut through the center of Potawatomi country. It passed through the fledgling town of Logansport, cleaved the northern half of Indiana into eastern and western sections, and ended in southwestern Michigan. During its construction from 1826 to 1834, this particular road had the ironic effect of dividing a tribe while uniting a band. One group of Potawatomi clung to a traditional lifestyle and eventually accepted—under U.S. pressure—removal to the West. Another group, however, pursued a strategy of adaptive resistance, adopting usable cultural and economic practices from Euro-Americans in the hope of remaining on a portion of their traditional lands. These Potawatomi, whose villages coalesced into a distinct band alliance in opposition to those who accepted removal, had no intention of surrendering all their land and offered U.S. officials just a narrow corridor for a road to facilitate travel and trade. This tactical decision, initiated in 1826, became a defining element in their new identity and a way to manage risk in a rapidly changing environment.<sup>1</sup>

---

Grant support for some of the research for this article was provided by the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., and the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Indianapolis. I would also like to thank the Tribal Chairman, Tribal Council, and Traditions Committee of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians (Dowagiac, Michigan) for their insights and assistance in crafting this article, as well as for their ongoing support of my research.

<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions in the United States*, part 2, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1896-97* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), plates 126, 127, 136.



The primary risk for the Potawatomi was that they owned desirable land. Joel W. Martin characterized the American view of territory in the west as a “gaze of development.”<sup>2</sup> This phrase implies something more than the mere establishment of homesteads; it suggests the incorporation of a region peopled by Euro-Americans into the expanding nation. Migration would foster new communities in western lands and link them to eastern population and commercial centers through a developing transportation network. The “gaze of development” viewed land as both property and a resource that Euro-Americans intended to own and exploit.<sup>3</sup>

Native Americans had an opposing view—the land was theirs. This remark is not meant to be flippant; it accurately reflects the statements of tribal leaders. It also summarizes the basic impasse that U.S. and Potawatomi negotiators encountered every time they met for talks. Prior to the 1831 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia*, which declared Indians “domestic dependent nations . . . in a state of pupilage,” the federal government had acknowledged basic Native land rights.<sup>4</sup> By the 1820s and 1830s, however, U.S. officials began to insist that Native land rights required occupancy and use. The problem was that the U.S. government and Potawatomi leadership defined these concepts differently.<sup>5</sup>

Federal officials maintained that Native Peoples were entitled to retain residential property, but they questioned whether unoccupied reservation land was being put to efficient use. Postwar treaties in the Great Lakes region had reduced tribal holdings to reservations that were mere fragments of what the Potawatomi had formerly claimed. Still, most of these reservations were parceled out in multiple mile-square sections, making them sizable chunks of land when compared to homesteads and even frontier towns. Many reservations included the choicest

---

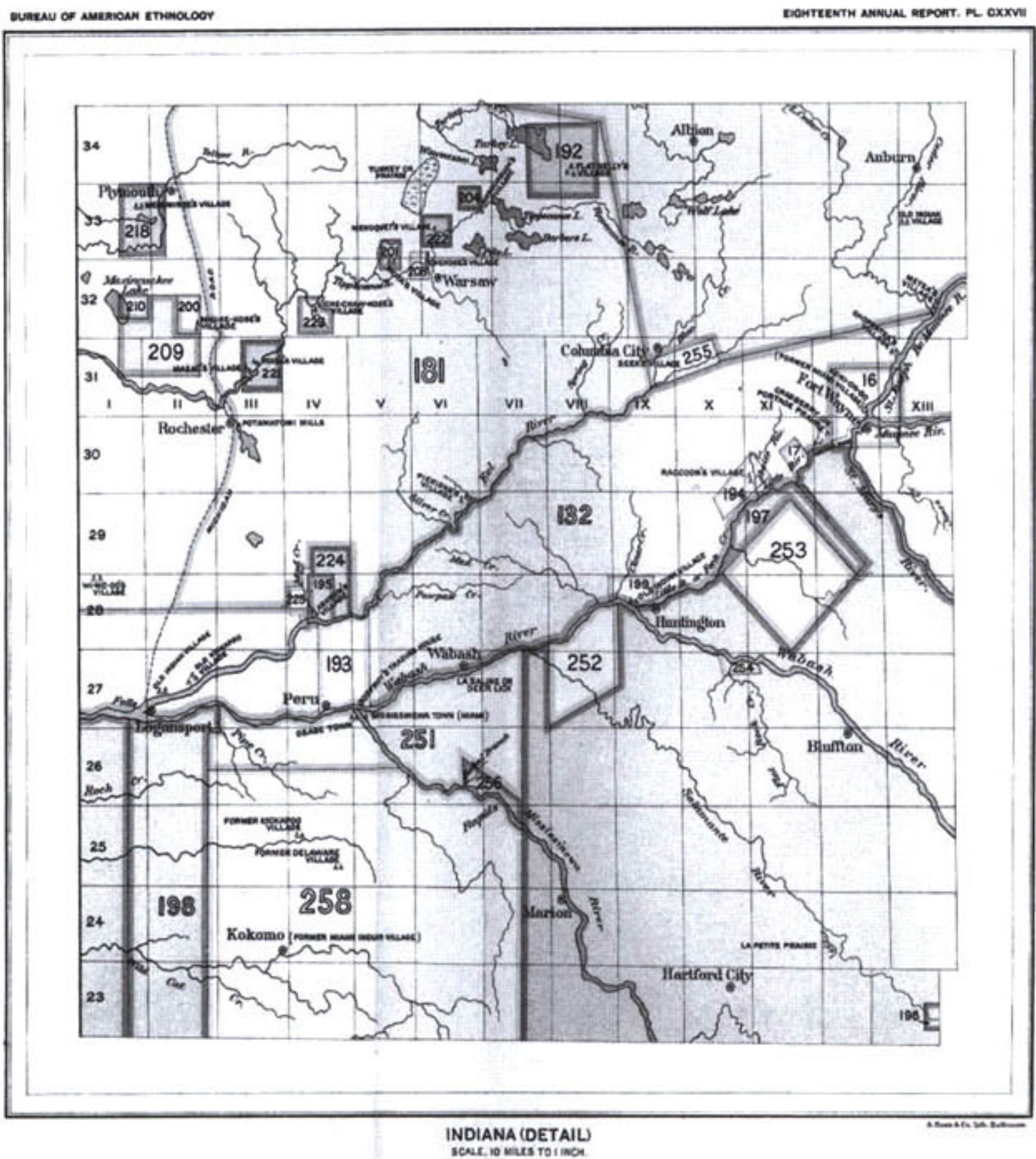
<sup>2</sup> Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon, 1991), 92.

<sup>3</sup> Susan E. Gray, *The Yankee West: Community Life on the Michigan Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 13-14, 22-25; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1990), 68-72, 76, 129, 140-44; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 270-71, 290.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 59.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 3-4.





Source: Charles C. Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions in the United States*, part 2, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1896-97* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), plate 127.

Indian land cessions (detail) showing reservations ceded later

farmland, hunting grounds, and fishing spots in a local region. Federal officials and American entrepreneurs charged that the Potawatomi were not developing the rich potential of their real estate. Moreover, U.S. observers maintained that reservations embraced more land than any



group of homesteaders needed, regardless of whether they were Native Americans or Euro-Americans.<sup>6</sup>

In the face of these pressures, Potawatomi ideas about land occupancy and use had become partially acculturated. Experience had taught tribal leaders the value of having treaties, and not just verbal agreements but actual documents. The treaties described the physical boundaries of land that had been converted to property. The distinction between land and property was critical. American settlers were systematically encroaching on Indian lands by the early nineteenth century, dispossessing various tribes. Treaties and other formal agreements fixed boundaries legally, thereby determining that a given piece of land was definitely owned and that property rights over that land should be respected. With documents in hand, tribal leaders thought they should be allowed to decide questions about efficient land occupancy and use. Their treaties described reservation boundaries, but how they chose to live upon or develop their property should, they believed, be left to their own discretion.<sup>7</sup>

Potawatomi leaders who made agreements with the United States while retaining discretion over their resources had adopted a hybrid strategy well adapted to the changes that threatened to envelop their people. This strategy protected the Potawatomi's rights in an American context while asserting their indigenous autonomy. Although partially consistent with this strategy, the agreement to allow construction of the Michigan Road through tribal lands went further, as those villages in favor of the project hoped to use the advantages it brought to develop

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul W. Gates, "Land Policy and Tenancy in the Prairie Counties of Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 35 (March 1939): 19-20; idem, "The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 66 (July 1942): 330-31; idem and Robert W. Swenson, *History of Public Land Law and Development* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), 203, 463-64; Ronald N. Satz, "Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era: The Old Northwest as a Test Case," in *An Anthology of Western Great Lakes Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1987), 239-41; Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 182-83.

<sup>7</sup> Leonard A. Carlson, "Learning to Farm: Indian Land Tenure and Farming before the Dawes Act," in *Property Rights and Indian Economies*, ed. Terry L. Anderson (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), 67-70, 73, 81; Paul W. Gates, "Indian Allotments Preceding the Dawes Act," in *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West*, ed. John G. Clark and Gene L. Anderson (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1971), 141-60; Satz, "Indian Policy," 239-40. Charles C. Royce provides a schedule for land cessions that records the dates, tribes, and boundary descriptions. See *Indian Land Cessions in the United States, 1784-1894*, U.S. serial set, no. 4015, 56<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. The schedules are also available at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwss-ilc.html>. Accessed April 19, 2008.



their own lands, derive economic benefits, and resist removal. These villages formed a band alliance that distinguished itself from other regional villages whose members were unwilling to adapt and eventually accepted removal.

Paul Halstead and John O'Shea have offered a useful concept for explaining the type of cultural change that Potawatomi leaders initiated, which later resulted in the development of a distinct "civilized" band that successfully resisted removal. Halstead and O'Shea suggest four main practices that societies may employ in order to avoid collapse when faced with unexpected shifts in their environment: "mobility, physical storage, diversification, and exchange."<sup>8</sup> The final two elements, diversification and exchange, are the most applicable to the "civilizing" Potawatomi's tactic of adaptive resistance. This particular Potawatomi band diversified its resources and facilitated an exchange of supplies and ideas in order to reduce the risks of dependency and removal.<sup>9</sup>

Studies have accepted that Potawatomi communities adapted to environmental shifts, though the nature and success of these attempts have remained matters for continuing discussion. R. David Edmunds offered one of the most intriguing ideas about what the Potawatomi were doing in the early nineteenth century. In a short, underappreciated, but aptly titled article, "Redefining Red Patriotism," he described an attempt by the *wkama* (leader)<sup>10</sup> Five Medals to convince Quaker and

---

<sup>8</sup> Paul Halstead and John M. O'Shea, "Cultural Responses to Risk and Uncertainty," in *Bad Year Economics: Cultural Responses to Risk and Uncertainty*, ed. Halstead and O'Shea (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>9</sup> George Washington's administration believed that Native communities would struggle amid diminishing natural resources. Secretary of War Henry Knox observed that as white settlement approached and game diminished, Natives either had either to adapt to the changes or "sell further tracts for small considerations." These pressures would initiate a cascade effect in the West as tribes encroached on neighboring tribes' lands: "Hence they destroy each other" and create a volatile frontier for everybody. What federal officials were trying to do with the "civilization" policy was to assist Native Peoples in a cultural transformation, the need for which was created by American expansion. It was an effort to tamp down smoldering resentment that threatened to erupt into fighting as natural resources became unreliable. Washington found partners in this effort among the Potawatomi, like Five Medals, and others in the Great Lakes region. See Henry Knox to President of the U.S., June 15, 1789, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1834), 1: 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> *Wkama* and *Wkamek* are the singular and plural forms of what the Potawatomi called their leaders. On the terms and the roles of Potawatomi leaders, see James A. Clifton, "Potawatomi Leadership Roles: On Okama and Other Influential Personages," in *Papers of the Sixth Algonquin Conference, 1974*, ed. William Cowan, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper no. 23 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1975): 49, 73, 77, 91-94;



Moravian missionaries to come to the region and help the Potawatomi enhance and expand their agricultural subsistence practices.<sup>11</sup> Edmunds emphasized that historians should interpret Five Medals's overture as a sign that some *wkamek* saw a need for change, and indeed the missionaries were successful. By 1808 some Potawatomi communities had cleared fields and planted crops; a few individuals had even started living in cabins. Advocates of militant resistance to U.S. expansionism gained temporary ascendancy, however, branded leaders who encouraged adaptation as treacherously accommodating, and forced missionaries to leave Indian country for a time. Only a limited number of studies have explored the theme of "civilization" as adaptation among the Anishinaabe since Edmunds's work, most notably Susan Sleeper-Smith's study of the Potawatomi, James McClurken's examination of the Odawa, and Mary Theresa Bonhage-Freund, Kari-Jo Johnson, and Aimmi Knarr's consideration of the Ojibwe (Chippewa).<sup>12</sup>

---

idem, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 216-21; and R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 23, 226.

<sup>11</sup> R. David Edmunds, "Redefining Red Patriotism: Five Medals of the Potawatomis," *Red River Valley Historical Review* 5 (Spring 1980): 13.

<sup>12</sup> A number of studies address Native American engagement of "civilization," but they lack cohesion as a body of literature, except perhaps the works associated with the so-called five civilized tribes of the southeast. The works that have laid the historiographic foundation for this analysis are too numerous to cite, but include Anthony F. C. Wallace and Sheila C. Steen, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage, 1969); William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renaissance in the New Republic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). Works concerning the intertribal and intratribal nature of the debate over "civilization" that inspired this study include Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); 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); Frederick E. Hoxie, *Parading through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America, 1805-1935* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and James M. McClurken, "'We Wish to Be Civilized': Ottawa-American Political Contests on the Michigan Frontier" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1988). Works that reflect the Potawatomi's engagement of "civilization" and have directly contributed to this article include Edmunds, "Redefining Red Patriotism," 13-24; idem, *The Potawatomis*, 227; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 248-58; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); James A. Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683-1983: Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984); Paul O. Myhre, "Potawatomi Transformation: Potawatomi Responses to Catholic and Baptist Mission Strategy and Competition, 1822-1872" (PhD. diss., St. Louis University, 1998). For archaeological evidence concerning



When U.S. policy shifted from "civilization" to removal, adaptation was a familiar concept that became a formidable resistance tactic for the Potawatomi. The view that "civilization" was a tactical maneuver on the part of some Native leaders and communities has been somewhat muted in the existing historical literature, though much evidence supports it. It is a view that elevates underestimated leaders who played significant roles, reinterprets other leaders who have been characterized by some as self-interested traitors, and challenges the assumption that U.S. officials were the sole architects of Indian policy, particularly the "civilization" policy.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps, as Edmunds implies, scholars have been reluctant to focus on people who seemed too accommodating to American settlers and the federal government. It is easy to dismiss these Native Americans as

---

the material lifestyles of adaptive Indians, see Mary Theresa Bonhage-Freund, Kari-Jo Johnson, and Aimmi Knarr, "Assimilation or Adaptation? Late Historic Chippewa Subsistence Strategies in Central Lower Michigan," *Michigan Archaeologist* 48 (January/March 2002): 117-48. An entire issue of the *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 31 (Spring 2006) focuses on the history and archaeology of removal period sites associated with the Potawatomi.

<sup>13</sup> Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 227. Edmunds explains that most admired culturally blended frontier occupation was not the yeoman farmer; it was the trader. This admiration for the trader seemed to peak in the late 1700s. By the early 1800s, many traders were perceived as little more than parasitic entrepreneurs or shills of the federal government, though some historians believe that some traders remained respected and personally connected to Native communities. I am arguing that if the Potawatomi could reorganize their culture around the ideal of the syncretized trader, they could also reorganize it around the ideal of the syncretized yeoman farmer. By setting up the Michigan Road to facilitate shipping and technical assistance among interested villages, adaptive Potawatomi hoped to assist this cultural transformation. The road allowed the Potawatomi to acquire agricultural supplies and assistance, internalize the concept of yeomanry, and reinterpret it through the lens of their own cultural norms and traditions. See Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 215-28, 242, 249, 256, 258-59. For differing views on the status of traders among the Michiana Potawatomi in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see J. W. Edmonds, *Report of J. W. Edmonds, United States' Commissioner, upon the Disturbance at the Potawatomie Payment: September, 1836* (New York: Scatcherd and Adams, 1837), 4-5; Daniel McDonald, *A Twentieth Century History of Marshall County, Indiana* (Chicago: Lewis Pub., 1908), 1-46; R. David Edmunds, "'Designing Men Seeking a Fortune': Indian Traders and the Potawatomi Claims Payment of 1836," *Indiana Magazine of History* 77 (June 1981): 109-10; Bert Anson, "The Fur Traders in Northern Indiana" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1953), 34-43; Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Indian Traders on the Middle Border: The House of Ewing, 1827-54* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 1-8; Prucha, *Indian Policy*, 48-50, 58, 72-73; Francis P. Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 119-20, 125-34; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 220-24.



inauthentic and their leadership as illegitimate. The romanticized Shawnee brothers, Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa, said as much as they attempted to unite Native Peoples for a militant resistance campaign. As Gregory Evans Dowd notes, the “civilized” leaders “provided the anvil upon which the prophets forged this early nineteenth-century phase of the struggle for Indian unity.”<sup>14</sup> Any interpretation sympathetic to these so-called “accommodationists” presumably challenges the historical reputations of such iconic figures as Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa; thus, historical consideration of the “civilizing” Natives has remained incomplete.

Although certain Native leaders cooperated with the American government, they were not necessarily coopted by that government. On the contrary, many leaders who appeared superficially to be “sellouts” were, in fact, just as tactically shrewd as their U.S. counterparts. They were resisting American encroachment as vehemently as were their militant detractors. True, this resistance did not involve heroic suffering and does not lend itself to a stirring historical narrative, but it is the stuff of historical intrigue. What these so-called sellouts offered their people was a strategy that truly struck fear into the hearts of Americans because it was subtle, carefully calculated, and, most important, workable. Anthony F. C. Wallace observes, “It was not the ‘savagery’ of the Indians that land-hungry whites dreaded; it was their ‘civilization.’”<sup>15</sup> In this view, militant resistance was suicidal, but adaptive resistance offered Native Americans a fighting chance.

Many Native American cultures have survived, and continue to thrive to this day, because their people routinely adapted to environmental changes. Some of the most successful Native communities in this regard have gone unremarked because they were never truly defeated; their leaders knew exactly what needed to be done and unobtrusively set about doing it. As Frederick Hoxie states, Indians “are people who initiate, adapt, and win as well as suffer and lose. . . . [As] long as Indians are defined as people whose histories end with the triumph of industrialization . . . they will be invisible members of American society.”<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Susan Sleeper-Smith observes that the Potawatomi of southwestern Michigan were “hiding in plain view” after removal.<sup>17</sup> Exploring how and why Native communities adapted to

---

<sup>14</sup> Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 131.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Hoxie, *Parading through History*, 3, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 116.



changes in their environment does not chronicle their assimilative collapse, but rather illustrates their vitality and their leaders' foresight.

In the 1820s, after a hiatus during the upheaval and warfare of the 1810s, some Potawatomi leaders again began to engage the "civilization" policy in their villages. The residents of those settlements selectively adopted aspects of the American lifestyle and adapted them to their indigenous culture. This cultural blending continued throughout the 1830s, but during that decade the federal government's removal policy overtook the "civilization" policy, provoking sharp divisions among the Potawatomi over how to respond—by continuing the "civilizing" leaders' policy of adaptation as a way to stay put or by accepting removal.<sup>18</sup>

As Potawatomi leaders debated, their arguments incorporated religious, regional, and lifestyle differences, but did not hinge on any one factor. As Richard White has noted, the basic political unit for Native Peoples in the Great Lakes region was the village, although villages routinely banded together over shared interests.<sup>19</sup> Thus the debate over "civilization" and removal tended to be structured as a disagreement among villages, and competing village networks came to oppose one another over how to address the issues. Internecine hostilities were most apparent in the Michiana area, where villages espousing the two tendencies lived in close proximity and American officials were most active in seeking removal. Rival networks coalesced along two axes—one network inhabiting the Tippecanoe River valley, whose members were more traditional in lifestyle and amenable to removal, and one residing along the route of the Michigan Road, whose members had adopted a syncretistic lifestyle and opposed removal. The former band alliance was an eastern offshoot of the "prairie" Potawatomi located primarily in northern Illinois, whereas the latter band had expanded southward from the "woodland" Potawatomi located largely in southern Michigan.<sup>20</sup> This division was evident during negotiation of the Treaty

---

<sup>18</sup> Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 61-68; Prucha, *Great Father*, 179-81, 183; Wallace, *Long, Bitter Trail*, 65-70.

<sup>19</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 16; Thomas Conway, "Potawatomi Politics," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 65 (Winter 1972): 403-4, 414.

<sup>20</sup> There was a traditional split between the "woods" bands of Michigan and Indiana and the "prairie" bands of Illinois and Wisconsin. This split was acknowledged by U.S. officials during the removal period and seen in post-removal conflicts studied by



of Chicago in 1833. The key antiremoval *wkama* Leopold Pokagon declared that he was one of the “wood Indians,” whom he differentiated from the “prairie Indians” despite acknowledging that they were Potawatomi.<sup>21</sup> Pokagon opposed land cessions and westward removal because he wanted to protect his people and preserve their homes, but his concerns were also the result of tribal divisions that had caused Potawatomi bands to evolve in divergent ways.<sup>22</sup>

The “civilizing” Potawatomi, though sometimes called the Catholic Potawatomi, were in fact a mixture of traditionalists, Catholic converts, and even Protestant converts. Since many leaders and residents of settlements that chose to reject the “civilization” policy were also Christian converts, one cannot say that Catholicism was the decisive factor in band distinctions. Nonetheless, it played a part in shaping the identity of the “civilized” Potawatomi. When priests were invited to certain villages, they aided the residents’ efforts to become more self-sufficient through agriculture and trade. As vocational educators and supply conduits, priests facilitated agricultural and lifestyle changes among the “civilizing” band of Potawatomi.<sup>23</sup>

---

James A. Clifton. See *Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Tribes of Indians, 1801-69*, RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, microfilm, T-494 (hereafter cited as NAM, T-494), roll 3, frame 75, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), Washington, D.C. (italics in the original); Alexander Wolcott to Lewis Cass, December 23, 1828, RG M1, Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1814-1851, microfilm, roll 23, frame 532, NARA; Report of the Commissioners to Negotiate the Miami and Potawatomi Treaty, October 20, 1832, 1832 Potawatomi File; George B. Porter to Elbert Herring, March 16, 1833, 1833 Potawatomi File, both in Great Lakes-Ohio Valley Indian Archives, Indiana University, Bloomington (hereafter GBLA); James A. Clifton, “Factional Conflict and the Indian Community: The Prairie Potawatomi Case,” in *The American Indian Today*, ed. Stuart Levine and Nancy O. Lurie (Deland, Fla: Everett Edwards, 1968); W. Benjamin Secunda and Mark R. Schurr, “Comparative Surveys of Menominee Village Site Locations in Marshall County, Indiana,” 47-52, Investigative Report 2005-1, for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indianapolis, 2005; W. Benjamin Secunda, Mark R. Schurr and Michelle Pribbernow, “An Investigation of Historic Potawatomi Sites in Northern Indiana,” 5-6, 18-24, Investigative Report 2002-1, for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

<sup>21</sup> NAM T-494, roll 3, frame 75.

<sup>22</sup> Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 234-35, 240; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 52-53; idem, “Potawatomi Leadership Roles,” 48; David A. Baerreis, “The Band Affiliation of Potawatomi Treaty Signatories,” Great Lakes Project, 2, GBLA; Royce, comp. *Indian Land Cessions*, plates 126, 127.

<sup>23</sup> R. David Edmunds, “George Winter: Mirror of Acculturation,” in *Indians and a Changing Frontier: The Art of George Winter*, comp. Sarah E. Cooke and Rachel B. Ramadhyani



Geographical and political considerations were as important as religion in shaping Potawatomi responses to pressures for removal. At the time of the Indian Removal Act (1830) the Michiana Potawatomi were living on isolated reservations. These were large enough to encompass geographic areas such as river valleys, but their manmade boundaries interrupted the region's natural contiguity. The transformation of land into property interrupted natural routes of travel and communication such as rivers and streams. The fragmented reserves had to be united in order for Potawatomi village leaders to coordinate their activities.<sup>24</sup> New connections had to be made for bands to be viable, and some Potawatomi began turning to roads and trails to accomplish this goal. A number of Potawatomi leaders became very specific about where roads should be established as a way of directing the forces of change. The decisions of these *wkamek* reflected a plan to unite isolated reserves, provide for their people, and protect their property. These were precisely the functions envisioned for the Michigan Road as the main artery that would unite "civilizing" settlements.<sup>25</sup>

The Potawatomi reservations located along the Michigan Road saw the greatest adaptation to new environmental realities. Leaders on

---

(Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1993), 32-33; Daniel McDonald, *1881 History, Combined with 1908, 1922 Atlases: Marshall County, Indiana* (1881; repr., Mt. Vernon, Ind.: Windmill Pub., 1998), 21; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions*, plates 126, 127, 136; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 13, 4, map 25. David A. Baerreis explains that "geographically contiguous villages and settlements" among the Potawatomi "acted as quasi-political units, commonly designated as bands." Neighboring villages often allied because they shared certain geographical features that eased communication and coordination. This is most evident in treaties with Euro-Americans wherein the Potawatomi usually identified themselves in geographic terms such as the river valley in which they resided. *Wkamek* typically demanded that negotiators recognize these internal divisions. See Baerreis, "Band Affiliation of Potawatomi Treaty Signatories," 1-2. The papers of Indian Agent General John Tipton are replete with these geographic references. See, e.g., Tipton: Pay Roll of Potawatomi Indians, 6-8 September 1828, in *The John Tipton Papers*, ed. Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker, 3 vols. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942), 2: 24-26.

<sup>25</sup> For discussions of the tribe's land use and occupancy, see Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions*; Tanner, ed., *Atlas*; Donald J. Berthrong, *An Historical Report on Indian Use and Occupancy of Northern Indiana and Southwestern Michigan* (New York: Garland, 1974); Emily J. Blasingham, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, and J. A. Jones, *Indians of Western Illinois and Southern Wisconsin* (New York: Garland, 1974); Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin and David B. Stout, *Indians of Illinois and Northwestern Indiana* (New York: Garland, 1974); Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin and Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Indians of Northern Ohio and Southeastern Michigan: An Ethnohistorical Report* (New York: Garland, 1974).



these reserves had deliberately plotted the road, as it developed between the years 1826 to 1834, so that their settlements were close to the trade goods, agricultural supplies, and amenities that aided and defined “civilization.” Moreover, U.S. Indian agents, missionaries, and traders all used the roads and intersecting trails regularly, which connected adaptive Potawatomi villages to American frontier towns. These included the villages of Menominee, Leopold Pokagon, Aubbeenaubbee, Chechawkose, and Ashkum, as well as smaller satellite villages. The Michigan Road not only provided isolated villages with a contrived contiguity, but also it gave them a new identity as part of a band alliance with a modified culture as well as a shared commitment to resist removal.<sup>26</sup>

The Michigan Road band alliance’s distinctive identity became most evident when its leaders clashed with those of opposing settlements and bands. A joint annuity-disbursement and removal conference held in Logansport, Indiana, in 1836 exposed these divisions quite clearly. Leaders who favored removal included Neswaukay, Pashpoho, Mesquawbuck, and Monoquet. Their villages were located along the Tippecanoe River, where traffic and trade had all but ended and the settlements had no connection to the Michigan Road. The leaders of these villages dictated a letter to President Andrew Jackson in which they identified those *wkamek* resisting removal by region and name. The message made repeated references to the “St. Joseph” and “Catholic Indians” to the north. The proremoval *wkamek* blamed the “Catholic and British Indians, French and half french, & the Priests” for all of the tension between the bands and the resistance to U.S. policy. They added that “*those* Indians had refused to sell and remove west & they had shut their ears against your [President Jackson’s] Council.”<sup>27</sup>

Colonel Abel C. Pepper, the Indian subagent heading the conference, corroborated both the charges and identifying terminology in a letter to the secretary of war. In addition to the Potawatomi leaders supporting removal (collectively dubbed the “Wabash Chiefs and Indians”), Pepper explained that: “there were also on the ground about 300 Northern Indians belonging to the Chicago Agency, some of whom

---

<sup>26</sup> Royce, comp., *Indian Land Cessions*, plates 126, 127, 136; Tanner, *Atlas*, 134, map 25.

<sup>27</sup> Abel C. Pepper to the U. S. Secretary of War, October 28, 1836; Letter of the Chiefs as Transmitted to the President, October 18, 1836, (*italics added*), both in box 30, folder 152, photocopy from National Archives, RG 75, in Donald J. Berthrong files (hereafter Berthrong Files), Western Historical Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.



had been with the Wabash Indians all summer, and who had been encouraged by that portion of Catholic Indians opposed to emigration, to settle and live upon their Reserves. These Northern and Catholic Indians, headed and advised, as I have great reason to believe, by some white men, insisted that the Annuity should be divided amongst the Whole number of Indians on the ground; that the proper Chiefs of the Wabash Pottawattimmies should sell no more land, but reserve what they had for the common use of all." Pepper refused to negotiate separately or distribute payments equitably among the bands. The "Northern" or "Catholic" Potawatomi responded forcefully. They "threatened to Kill the [Wabash] Chiefs if they sold the land."<sup>28</sup>

Despite Pepper's irritated references to Catholic Indians, something beyond Catholicism united the *wkamek* who were opposing removal as a band. Two *wkamek* mentioned by name in the letters, Shipshewana and Ashkum, made threats against the "Wabash Chiefs" and disrupted any attempt to broker a deal. Shipshewana was a Catholic convert who had relocated most of his people to be closer to the largest mission and chapel in the region at the *wkama* Menominee's village sometime in the mid-1830s. Ashkum, however, was a traditionalist residing along the Eel River in present-day Miami County, Indiana. Although a letter requesting funds for education at his village indicates that Ashkum engaged in "civilization" efforts with the help of Catholic missionaries, a white witness stated that he did not "remember seeing him among the priests' converts."<sup>29</sup>

Geographic references by the proremoval *wkamek* and Pepper to places in the St. Joseph River valley point toward Leopold Pokagon's reservation in southwestern Michigan, but the "northern" label does not fit any more neatly than "Catholic" in describing the antiremoval *wkamek*. Shipshewana had relocated some fifty miles south of the southernmost point on the St. Joseph River, and Ashkum's reservation

---

<sup>28</sup> Pepper to U. S. Secretary of War; Letter of the Chiefs as Transmitted to the President.

<sup>29</sup> George Winter, box 2, folder 6, item 4, George Winter Manuscripts Collection (hereafter Winter Collection), Tippecanoe County Historical Society, Lafayette, Ind. Purdue University is digitizing the Winter Manuscripts. Most, but not all, of the documents in this collection are available online at <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/exhibits/winter/writings.html>. Accessed April 18, 2008. See also Pepper to U. S. Secretary of War; Letter of the Chiefs as Transmitted to the President; Father Louis Deseille to Abel C. Pepper, March 21, 1836, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 3: 246-47; Winter, box 2, folder 6, items 1 and 4, Winter Collection. See also Rachel Celmer to Plymouth Public Library, September 9, 1982, Indians/Indiana file, Plymouth Public Library, Plymouth, Ind., which discusses the local/oral histories about Shipshewana moving to Menominee's reserve with his people—a trend toward village coalescence among the Potawatomi.



was actually located south of the villages of the proremoval leaders along the Tippecanoe River and east of Logansport, Indiana.

What united antiremoval villages and their leaders was not a northern location or a collective conversion to Catholicism. Rather, it was the common desire of the *wkamek* who had successfully engaged the “civilization” policy with the assistance of Catholic missionaries to oppose the federal government’s removal policy and convince their people to do likewise.<sup>30</sup> The map of Michiana Potawatomi reservations in 1836 reveals that the geographic feature linking the “civilized” leaders and their locations is the Michigan Road. Historical evidence concerning this road’s creation and purpose will confirm that these *wkamek* fostered realignment of villages into an allied network during the transformative removal period.

The “civilized” band of Potawatomi came together just like the long, winding road that connected their settlements—one piece at a time. Band members were a mixture of those who had long fought American expansion and young upstarts who were just establishing themselves. The development of their villages into a network of thriving settlements that cooperated with one another as well as with those Americans who were willing to be helpful emerged from their various efforts to adapt the “civilization” policy to provide for their needs. This put them in a good position to resist U.S. expansionism. The Michigan Road was the artery that sustained this band as “civilization” became the lifeblood of every village’s survival.

In general, the “civilized” Potawatomi survived by incorporating American lifestyle and subsistence patterns into their way of life, nourishing a steady flow of trade and supply, and securing help from those who could teach them new skills, such as blacksmiths, millers, and field hands. Each of these keys to survival had been promised to them in some form in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. But Tecumseh’s pan-Indian military resistance movement successfully aborted “civilization” efforts shortly after their implementation. Only after the War of 1812 demonstrated the futility of open conflict and largely discredited its advocates could the adaptive resistance strategy reemerge from the woodland Potawatomi settlements where it had originated. However, the constraints of a postwar reservation system complicated logistics. The

---

<sup>30</sup> Clifton, “Factional Conflict,” 197.



Americans' plan to build a road offered the Potawatomi a solution to problems of transportation and communications.<sup>31</sup>

Negotiations for the development of the Michigan Road, held in September and October of 1826, occurred within the context of American efforts to secure a general land-cession treaty for parts of northern Indiana. It cannot be said "positively with whom the road project originated," but it is clear that both the Americans and the Potawatomi understood its usefulness.<sup>32</sup> The treaty-making process illustrates the burgeoning cohesiveness that "civilization" provided to village *wkamek*, and their diplomatic strength is evident in the results. The treaty's terms "were far more liberal than those granted to many other Indian tribes and it might be expected that they would have induced a very extensive cession of territory. Such was not the case."<sup>33</sup> The Potawatomi only surrendered a small tract of land; yet they gained supplies, assistance, and a road that could be used to unite the "civilizing" settlements.

The interested parties, including Potawatomi and Miami leaders and U.S. agents and officials from Indiana and the Michigan Territory, conducted joint talks. American officials needed approval from the Potawatomi and Miami to complete the Michigan Road, as it traversed both tribes' lands; the Potawatomi claimed lands north of the Eel River and the Miami claimed lands to the south of it. Historically the two peoples had shared a close association; U.S. negotiators described the tribes as "frequently intermingled" with "sometimes a common interest to the same district of country."<sup>34</sup> Leaders from the "civilizing" elements of each tribe led their respective delegations to the conference. During the negotiating sessions, Indiana's governor, James Ray, and Michigan's territorial governor, Lewis Cass, broached the idea of building a major highway that would run north to south through Indian country for the purpose of linking "Indianapolis, our great village, to Lake Michigan."<sup>35</sup> American proponents reasoned that new travel and shipping routes would aid the region's development. In their sales pitch to village

---

<sup>31</sup> Idem, *Prairie People*, 188-93, 266-67; Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 159-60, 205-6; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 87-88; Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 114, 131, 191; Edmunds, "Redefining Red Patriotism," 13-17.

<sup>32</sup> John Tipton to James Ray, October 26, 1827, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 806.

<sup>33</sup> Introduction, in *ibid.*, 1: 15.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis Cass, James Ray, and John Tipton to James Barbour, October 23, 1826, in *ibid.*, 1: 599.

<sup>35</sup> Proceedings, Potawatomi and Miami Treaty Negotiations, September 20-October 23, 1826, in *ibid.*, 1: 587.



leaders, they urged that Native villages adjacent to the road would materially “benefit themselves by creating facilities for travelling and increasing the value of their remaining country.”<sup>36</sup>

In an effort to induce the necessary land cessions to create the road, the American negotiators offered various aids to “civilization.” The Potawatomi were to receive annuities that included two thousand dollars “for the term of twenty-two years” and a yearly supply of 160 “bushels of salt,” the nineteenth century’s most important preservative. Additionally, the Indians would retain the right to hunt on the ceded land and received promises of a corn mill on the Tippecanoe River, support for a mill operator and blacksmith, and two thousand dollars annually for “purposes of education.”<sup>37</sup> These were the tangible benefits offered to them if they agreed to the larger treaty.

The intangible benefits of constructing the Michigan Road proved to be more significant and appealing—providing Potawatomi leaders had a say in where it was built. The road would aid and increase the movement of missionaries and traders throughout the Potawatomi’s reservations. These individuals were critical to providing the education and supplies that the “civilizing” Potawatomi needed. Moreover, the Michigan Road, as well as its interconnecting routes, would provide a link between the group’s isolated reservations and enable *wkamek* to direct American travel and settlement around their vital fragments of land. Compromising on select land cessions would help ensure the integrity of the Potawatomi’s reserves and the discretion they exercised over these lands’ development. Thus, American expansion would mostly bypass the Potawatomi.<sup>38</sup>

Shrewd *wkamek* were ready to agree to the idea of building the Michigan Road, but the negotiations became contentious when some American officials overreached. Both Potawatomi and Miami leaders were already skittish about ceding land. Additional requests for land would likely scuttle any deal. Rather than allay the *wkamek*’s fears, Lewis Cass made a long speech that offered a solution to the tribe’s dilemma—cede all of their land and leave. Cass’s modest proposal stunned tribal leaders. The Potawatomi *wkama* Metea could only respond, “My Father, we cannot tell what time it will take us to make up

---

<sup>36</sup> Charles Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 2: 274.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 274.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 273-77.



our mind. We will consult together. As soon as we are done, we will call on you. That is all I have to say to you, my Father."<sup>39</sup>

When talks resumed, an older militant turned peacemaker named Aubbeenaubbee asserted himself on behalf of the Potawatomi. He prefaced his statement by explaining that "what you are going to hear from me now is not from me as an individual, but it is from my fellow young men, our war chiefs, our peace chiefs and from all, and not from me alone." Aubbeenaubbee reiterated that his comments were "the voice of a nation." Actually, they were the voice of a nascent band. He told American officials, "You have often asked us for land, which we have sold you. The foolish have sold you more than they ought. You now ask us for more land. The land on which we now live, we require for our subsistence, and our conclusion is of our young men, our chiefs, our warriors and all, not to sell you anymore. That is all we have to say to you."<sup>40</sup> Cass tried to find a more malleable *wkama* by asking, "If there are any more of the Pottawattamies who wish to say anything, we will now hear them."<sup>41</sup> But Aubbeenaubbee snapped back immediately that "I have told you what we have to say; you need not expect any thing more from us."<sup>42</sup> Aubbeenaubbee's defiant stance illustrates how intent the "civilizing" *wkamek* were about remaining on their land. In fact, the terseness with which he addressed American officials illustrates that he knew how important both acquiring material assistance and ensuring land security were to managing problems created by U.S. expansion and ultimately avoiding removal.

When Cass and Ray tried to entice the Indians into agreeing to removal, stating that game was plentiful in the West, the Miami leader Legros responded that "the Great Spirit has made and put men there, who have a right to that game, and it is not ours." He rebuffed the notion of land sales with equal rhetorical force in extraordinarily acculturated terms that demonstrated his grasp of American economic thinking. Legros pointed out that American officials spoke of the virtues of "civilization" while pitching the benefits of removal. He said that "you have told us to think a great deal of our land, and not to dispose of it, and that we should live by each other, like brothers, and sell and exchange our property as we choose. That is what we wish to do—we

---

<sup>39</sup> Proceedings, Potawatomi and Miami Treaty Negotiations, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 581.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1: 582; Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 229; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 207-8, 227.

<sup>41</sup> Proceedings, Potawatomi and Miami Treaty Negotiations, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 582.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 1: 582.



want to live like neighbours, and barter and trade with each other, if we can agree, if not, to part peaceably and each keep his own—but for this time we do not wish to sell our land.”<sup>43</sup>

James Ray responded that Legros’s oratory was “ingenious,” but he quickly threatened that “we could take your country by force and hold it, if we did not respect your rights.” Lewis Cass was blunter, proclaiming that “we conquered you.” A frustrated Aubbeenaubbee explained to the governors that the Potawatomi had “agreed to your request in part,” meaning limited land cessions but not a complete removal. He asked, “What is the reason you cannot hear?”<sup>44</sup>

General John Tipton, the U. S. Indian Agent, interceded at this point in an attempt to restore calm and salvage the agreement. Despite concurring with most of Legros’s arguments, the Potawatomi present agreed to resolve the situation with Tipton. The *wkamek* were cognizant of the benefits of the Michigan Road, and they still wanted it to be built. However, these leaders also knew that they could not cede an unreasonable amount of land for the road’s construction, maintenance, and related infrastructure such as waystations, taverns, and limited white settlement. The Potawatomi proposed a compromise. Though the words the *wkamek* used to persuade Tipton in a closed council are unknown, their effectiveness was clearly evident from the results they achieved on behalf of the “civilizing” villages. Federal officials backed Potawatomi demands in the immediate treaty negotiations, as well as in every future impasse encountered during the creation of the Michigan Road.<sup>45</sup>

Metea returned from the meeting with Tipton and announced to the two governors that the Potawatomi had “agreed to let you have the land [for the Michigan Road], but we want our price.” The Potawatomi demanded a “permanent annuity” of one hundred dollars for every man, woman, and child in the settlements that agreed to the deal.<sup>46</sup> Such a lifetime payout would, in a sense, have been tantamount to rent. Thus, the adaptive leaders were securing an annual fee for giving Americans a right-of-way. Additionally, the amenable leaders asked for all of the goods that American negotiators had brought to the conference as immediate compensation. State officials chose not to challenge the

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1: 583-84.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1: 584-85, 587, 588.

<sup>45</sup> Introduction, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 14; Thomas B. Helm, *History of Wabash County, Indiana* (Chicago: John Morris, 1884), 91.

<sup>46</sup> Proceedings, Potawatomi and Miami Treaty Negotiations, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 589-90.



combined will of tribal and federal leaders. Cass and Ray capitulated to all of the demands, except the permanent annuity, which they insisted must be limited to an apparently arbitrary twenty-two-year period. This kept the cost of the treaty down for the United States. The *wkamek* relented on this point. They also consented to "a strip of land . . . one hundred feet wide, for a road, and also, one section of good land contiguous to the said road, for each mile of the same."<sup>47</sup> This agreement concluded the Wabash Treaty of 1826.

Each of the *wkamek* in attendance, which included Aubbeenaubbee (of present-day Fulton County, Indiana), Chebass (of the St. Joseph River valley), and Metea (originally of Fort Wayne, Indiana, but later living near South Bend) requested and received a copy of the treaty document to safeguard their rights. The most important things that the *wkamek* gained at the Wabash meeting, however, were unity in favor of "civilization" and against removal, and control over the actual layout of the Michigan Road that would connect their villages.<sup>48</sup>

Tipton, Cass, and Ray wrote a letter to U.S. Secretary of War James Barbour, who oversaw Indian affairs, which confirms the burgeoning strength and unity among the "civilizing" Potawatomi. Given the attitudes exhibited by Cass and Ray during the negotiations, the letter reads as if it came from Tipton's pen. Although U.S. officials had accused Catholic missionaries and French traders of influencing opposition to removal among the "civilized" Potawatomi, this letter makes clear that the *wkamek* knew exactly what they were doing and were making their own decisions during these negotiations.

The letter basically states that the Potawatomi involved in the Michigan Road agreement were rallying to "civilization." The authors declare early on that "the Indians should be separated into two bands." Members of the first group fit the stereotypical image of the frontier Indian that was usually employed to justify removal: "As long as they can roam unmolested through the country, we may in vain expect to either reclaim them from the savage life they lead, or to induce them to seek a residence where their habits and pursuits will be less injurious to us." The second group was positioned "near the centre of Pattawatamie country," and no land cessions were obtained from it, but "that tribe

---

<sup>47</sup> Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Affairs*, 2: 274.

<sup>48</sup> Proceedings, Potawatomi and Miami Treaty Negotiations, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 590; Edmunds, *Potawatomis*, 202-6; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 211-13; William H. Keating, comp., *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of Saint Peter's River* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2003), 1: 84-87.



freely consented to give us land for the road described in the treaty, and for settlement along it.” Leaders of this new band alliance had told American officials that “a road may at times be useful to them in traveling, and it will readily furnish them with a market for their game, and the means of procuring their accustomed supplies.” Tipton and the others then add that “what is much more important to us, it will sever their possessions, and lead them at no distant day to place their dependance [sic] upon agricultural pursuits, or to abandon the country.” The Potawatomi were experiencing a realignment that was defined by its members’ decision either to “civilize” or to remove. The authors’ conclusion is noncommittal, suggesting ambivalence about the long-lasting effects of this realignment for the United States: “The eventual importance of this communication to the United States, either in a pecuniary or political view, it is no part of our duty to explain.”<sup>49</sup>

Tipton, Cass, and Ray also had to explain the actual terms of the agreement. Their (at times) tedious descriptions mostly seem to be attempts to rationalize their actions. The Indians had gotten the best of the Americans in this exchange, and the negotiators knew it. The Potawatomi surrendered land only “within specific bounds,” and the U.S. had to share “a joint interest with the Pattawatamies” that would “probably prevent them [the Americans] from taking possession of any part of it without formal consent.”<sup>50</sup> This meant in practice that Indiana and Michigan officials had to plot the Michigan Road one mile at a time across mile-square sections of land whose transfer had to meet with the approval of tribal *wkamek*. By engaging in the “civilization” process, those Potawatomi who took this approach gained considerable diplomatic leverage and political clout—a result that did not please the development-oriented officials from Indiana and Michigan.

Indiana officials immediately tried to manipulate the terms of the treaty. They empanelled a three-member board called the Michigan Road Commission to plot the route and oversee land sales. By 1828 significant lengths of the road had been laid out and construction was under way. However, when the commission informed the Potawatomi what lands were being transferred, the *wkamek* learned that the one-hundred-foot-wide strip of land for the road had been plotted separately from the mile-wide section of land that was supposed to be established along a contiguous route. The *wkamek* took their objections to Tipton,

---

<sup>49</sup> Cass, Ray, and Tipton to Barbour, October 23, 1826, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 602.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 603.



who quickly drafted a letter to Michigan's Lewis Cass warning him and his counterparts in Indiana that the proposed route for the Michigan Road was unacceptable and that the Potawatomi "will resist unless the land is taken contiguous to the road as mentioned in the Treaty."<sup>51</sup> Officials in Michigan and Indiana ignored him, and Tipton used his authority to contact the General Land Office (GLO) and halt the property transfers. Tipton told GLO Commissioner Edward Tiffin that "one strong objection on their [the Potawatomi's] part to the sale [of land for the Michigan Road] was a fear that they would be cheated in laying off the boundary line and reservations."<sup>52</sup> This prompted Tipton and Tiffin to seek a ruling from federal authorities, in particular the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Thomas McKenney. This choice benefited the "civilized" Potawatomi because McKenney had worked with interested Native leaders in fleshing out the "civilization" policy and was thus a bureaucratic ally.<sup>53</sup>

The federal authorities sided with the "civilized" *wkamek* just as they had at the 1826 treaty conference where the agreement for the Michigan Road was made. McKenney ordered that the road be contained within the one-mile wide, contiguous sections of land, and he also reconfigured the Michigan Road Commission. The federal government and tribal leaders were now given the right to appoint two of the three commission members. More importantly to the annoyed *wkamek*, a surveyor whom they knew and trusted, named only "Mr. C. Carter," was sent to plot the road and determine the section boundaries for land near their reservations.<sup>54</sup> This reassured village leaders because Carter listened to their requests about where to plot the route. To ensure no future scheming on the part of state officials, the U.S. Senate redacted the 1826 treaty, which originally granted the states the "*right to locate the said road, and to apply the said sections, or the proceeds thereof, to the making of the same, or any part thereof; and the said grant shall be at their sole disposal.*"<sup>55</sup> Striking out this clause meant that the federal government had control over the Michigan Road land sections. Practically, this meant that Tipton, in

---

<sup>51</sup> John Tipton to Lewis Cass, February 23, 1828, in *ibid.*, 2: 21.

<sup>52</sup> John Tipton to Edward Tiffin, February 9, 1827, in *ibid.*, 1: 655.

<sup>53</sup> John Tipton to Elijah Hayward, November 8, 1830, in *ibid.*, 2: 366; U.S. Congress, *House Documents*, doc. no. 85, 21<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess., February 1831 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1874), 3: 1-12; U.S. Office of the Federal Registrar, *Statutes at Large* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1874), 4: 473.

<sup>54</sup> John Tipton to Edward Tiffin, February 9 1827, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 655-56.

<sup>55</sup> Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Affairs*, 2: 274 (italics in the original). Kappler indicates that the Senate struck out those portions of the treaty article that he italicized.



concert with the “civilized” *wkamek*, would oversee the development of this land, which included everything from turnpikes to trade houses to settlements. In this battle for control of the road, the Potawatomi could claim total victory.<sup>56</sup>

Construction of the Michigan Road proceeded fairly smoothly considering its length and the nearly nine years it took to complete the project. The only problems occurred at the northern and southern extremes of the route. But the “civilizing” *wkamek* turned each impasse to their advantage, which further consolidated and unified their allied villages.

At the south end of the road, John Tipton tried to gain personal profit by entering into a speculative land deal in an area around the confluence of the Wabash and Eel rivers in north-central Indiana. The proposed development had considerable commercial potential because it was near the intersection of two important waterways and the water was shallow enough to facilitate constructing a bridge. Tipton and his business partners envisioned developing an entire town, which was eventually called Logansport. Tipton tried to convince Potawatomi leaders to bend the Michigan Road so that it would pass near these landholdings.<sup>57</sup>

Opportunistic *wkamek* used Tipton’s business venture as leverage for their own scheme. They agreed to route the Michigan Road through Logansport on the condition that the Indian Agency at Fort Wayne be relocated to the fledgling town. Potawatomi *wkamek* enlisted the support of Miami leaders in villages south of the Eel River to clinch the deal. Both Michiana tribes had been assigned to the Fort Wayne agency. The new site, being centrally located among the two peoples’ villages and situated at the intersection of two rivers and a road, was more convenient for collecting annuities and doing business. It would also make “civilization” efforts more efficient, because the Indians would have better access to supplies and assistance.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Benjamin B. Kercheval to John Tipton, February 9, 1827, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 654; U.S. Senate, *Senate Documents*, doc. no. 3; U.S. Senate, *Journal of the Senate of the United States*, 19<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1829), 2: 1-2, 31, 118, 184, 191; U.S. Congress, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States*, 19<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>d</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1829), 206-7, 305, 353, 356; Federal Registrar, *Statutes*, 4: 234-35.

<sup>57</sup> Introduction, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 13, 49, 25-29, 33-35.

<sup>58</sup> John Tipton to Thomas McKenney, February 7, 1827; John Tipton to Lewis Cass, February 18, 1827; John Tipton to Thomas McKenney, January 8, 1828; John Tipton to James Barbour, February 23, 1828; Potawatomi Chiefs to John Tipton, June 3, 1828, all in *ibid.*, 1: 651-53, 658; 2: 5, 20, 56-57.



The proposal obviously appealed to Tipton, who lobbied Washington in favor of relocating the agency. Most of his arguments, expressed in a long letter to Thomas McKenney, concerned Tipton's obligations as an Indian agent to regulate trade and mediate justice among Natives, traders, and settlers. However, two of his arguments reveal that Tipton found the "civilized" Potawatomi to be very persuasive. He expressed the Native Peoples' unhappiness at having to travel so far away from their villages to collect their annuities and to access services. Relocating the Indian agency made sense because a portion of the Indians' annuities were subsistence-related—e.g., seeds, livestock, tools, and farm equipment—and "the Indians . . . come daily" to see the blacksmith, whose services were necessary for "civilization" efforts to proceed. Tipton explained that relocating the agency to Logansport would allow the "civilizing" Potawatomi and Miami to "visit their Agent and Blacksmith get their plows, traps, &c mended without being compelled to mingle with those miserable white persons that live by . . . dishonourable traffick [sic]."<sup>59</sup>

Tipton's plans incensed state officials in Michigan and Indiana, as well as Fort Wayne's settlers and businesspeople, who depended on the trade factory (a government-backed trading facility) and government offices that were under the agent's purview. They demanded Tipton's resignation. Despite these protests, the federal government approved the transfer of the agency to Logansport on March 14, 1828. The move fattened Tipton's pocketbook, but it also aided the "civilization" efforts of the emerging Potawatomi band.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Tipton to McKenney, February 7, 1827.

<sup>60</sup> John Tipton to Lewis Cass, March 27, 1827; John McCorkle to Ewing brothers, February 6, 1828; John Tipton to Lewis Cass, February 23, 1828; Thomas McKenney to John Tipton, March 14, 1828; Thomas H. Blake to John Tipton, March 29, 1828; Jordan Vigus to John Tipton, May 8, 1828; Chauncy Carter to John Tipton, May 14, 1828; Samuel Lewis to John Tipton, May 26, 1828; John Tipton to Citizens of Indiana, August 28, 1828, all in *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 1: 682; 2: 18, 21, 31, 32-33, 43, 48, 52-53, 81-84; U.S. Senate, *Senate Documents*, doc. no. 189, 20<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1874) 5: 1-27; Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Affairs*, 2: 531-34. Fort Wayne businessman Jordan Vigus organized opposition to the relocation of the agency to Logansport. Indiana Senator James Noble introduced evidence of citizen opposition to the relocation of the agency and proposed a resolution to keep it in Fort Wayne. The resolution died after being tabled. See Carter to Tipton, May 14, 1828; U. S. Senate, *Senate Documents*, 20<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 5: 189; U. S. Senate, *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States*, 20<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: D. Green, 1828), 304, 311; *National Intelligencer*, April 19, 1828, 1, 3.



In the north, surveyors encountered problems when they reached the Michigan Territory in 1830-1831. The original layout of the road required land to be taken entirely from Pokagon's reserve, but the proposed construction threatened to ruin his settlement as well as annex fertile Michiana prairies near Terre Coupee and LaPorte, Indiana, along the state border. *Wkamek* from Pokagon's and Menominee's villages worked together to stop the road builders. They then appealed to Tipton and McKenney for help. McKenney instructed Tipton to "protect and satisfy" the *wkamek*.<sup>61</sup>

The matter was eventually resolved, but McKenney's influence was waning with the ascendancy of the Indian removal policy in Washington. To resolve the immediate crisis, McKenney gave orders to "send out a few of their head men with the agent [Tipton] and interpreter to see that the lines are correctly run, & to obviate thereby any future dissatisfaction."<sup>62</sup> Potawatomi leaders received assurances that the Bureau of Indian Affairs would take the matter to the president for review. Given that this meant appealing to the Jackson administration, which forcefully promoted Indian removal, it was a meaningless guarantee. Tipton, however, turned out to be a loyal bureaucrat throughout the change in policy toward the Indians, and he did what McKenney asked him to do without taking politics into account. He even posted notices along the Michigan Road that read: "All persons who n[ow] are or hereafter may enter upon the Indians land and violate the laws of the Country and the rights of the Indians [are hereby warned] that they will be proceeded against according to the law."<sup>63</sup>

"Pocagen . . . finally yielded his consent," and each side in this impasse received some of what it wanted.<sup>64</sup> In giving what was termed "their partial consent," Pokagon and Menominee granted access to the area "north of the Kankakee" River. They made it clear that they "objected to the surveys," but "consented as to agree not to molest the surveyors."<sup>65</sup> The Indiana "State Commissioner," one-third of the Michigan Road Commission, proceeded to select "64 sections of the

---

<sup>61</sup> John Tipton to Thomas McKenney, February 13, 1830; John Tipton to Lewis Cass, October 22, 1831, both in *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 2: 250, 452.

<sup>62</sup> Tipton to McKenney, February 13, 1830.

<sup>63</sup> John Tipton: Notice to Trespassers on Indian Lands, October 22, 1831, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 2: 453.

<sup>64</sup> Tipton to Cass, October 22, 1831.

<sup>65</sup> William Polke's Report to the General Assembly, December 14, 1831, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Indiana at Their 15<sup>th</sup> Session, 1831-32* (Indianapolis: Corydon, 1832), appendix D, 2, 3.



choice lands of the Terre Coupé and Porte Prairies" from survey reports.<sup>66</sup> Clearly state officials had coveted these lands all along, which the Potawatomi's successful "civilization" approach had denied them. The Potawatomi, however, did receive some benefit from this agreement. Given the contested nature of the Michigan Road's development on and around Pokagon's settlement, engineers created several small, interconnected routes throughout his reservation. This network provided extremely efficient movement between the villages and resources in the vicinity. Pokagon's reserve was literally transformed into a crossroads comprising the Michigan Road; the Chicago Road, which was an improved version of the Old Sauk Trail linking Detroit and Chicago; and the Fort Wayne Road, which had been proposed in 1828 to give the Potawatomi "rest for the sole[s] of their feet."<sup>67</sup> These transportation links made Pokagon's village a hub of activity for the "civilized" Potawatomi during the removal period.<sup>68</sup>

The village leaders in favor of the "civilizing" approach literally built off the Michigan Road as it neared completion, and the moves they made constituted the final steps needed to realign the Potawatomi villages into distinct bands. The road's final route skirted the largest tribal reservations—Aubbeenaubbee's, Menominee's, and Pokagon's—effectively connecting and drawing these villages closer together. More villages were then pulled into this band as the "civilization" movement continued to spread throughout the 1830s despite, or perhaps because of, passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830. Meanwhile, the villages of the more traditionalist *wkamek*, which were located along the Tippecanoe River flowing out of the Fort Wayne area, found themselves increasingly isolated once the Indian Agency moved to Logansport and the "civilization" movement blossomed along the Michigan Road.

Catholic missionaries returned to Michiana at the invitation of Leopold Pokagon and fellow *wkamek* on his reserve. Father Stephen T. Badin served as the new "civilizing" agent, replacing the Baptist missionary, Isaac McCoy, whom the Potawatomi found untrustworthy given his open advocacy of Indian removal. Badin and his later assistants consecrated the Michiana region's first removal-era Catholic chapel in 1829 at Pokagon's village. With the success of this initial

---

<sup>66</sup> Tipton to Cass, October 22, 1831.

<sup>67</sup> John Tipton to Thomas McKenney, July 14, 1828, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 2: 68.

<sup>68</sup> John D. DeFrees to John Tipton, September 7, 1832, in *ibid.*, 2: 700. See also Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian West*, 181.



enterprise, the heads of the dioceses whose jurisdictions overlapped in the region—Cincinnati (Ohio Diocese), Detroit (Michigan Diocese), and Vincennes (Indiana Diocese)—decided to cooperate and built a network of chapels, orphanages, and asylums. Priests ventured from southwestern Michigan into northern Indiana, using the Michigan Road and its intersecting routes and waterways to move efficiently. Catholic missionaries purchased land from “the government and from the other holders” in 1832. They established a second chapel and a school that later became the University of Notre Dame.<sup>69</sup> This became a central location from which priests itinerated among other Potawatomi villages and new settler communities where residents had requested missions.<sup>70</sup>

As word of the priests’ arrival and a modest renaissance at Pokagon’s village spread, other Potawatomi *wkamek* emulated this model. The “civilization” movement grew and strengthened just as its proponents had foreseen, as missionaries and traders used the Michigan Road. Potawatomi who solicited Catholic assistance included the villages of Chechawkose (near present-day Mentone, Indiana), Menominee (near present-day Plymouth, Indiana), and Ashkum (near present-day Denver, Indiana). A substantial number of Indians converted to Catholicism in the villages of Chechawkose and Menominee, each of which obtained a mission and a chapel in the mid-1830s. Ashkum, however, retained his traditional beliefs. He requested “civilization” instruction from Catholic missionaries and his people did receive it, but the *wkama* neither wanted nor allowed a chapel at his village. Thus the Michigan Road helped facilitate the hybridization of cultural identity that blended woodland Potawatomi traditions, a functionally acculturated lifestyle, and a visible, if not uniform, Catholic allegiance.<sup>71</sup>

The negotiations to create the Michigan Road taught both American and Potawatomi leaders the limits of their control. Their relationship

---

<sup>69</sup> Thomas T. McAvoy, *The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 182.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 174-81; J. Herman Schauinger, *Stephen T. Badin: Priest in the Wilderness* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Pub., 1956), 217-29; Joseph E. Coulter, “Catholic Missions among the Potawatomi Indians” (master’s thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1948), 9-11; John Gilmary Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854* (1857; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 393-95; Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States* (New York: America Press, 1938), 2: 176-80; Joseph Moose, “Catholicity among the Potawatomi,” *Indian Advocate* 2 (July 1890): 3.

<sup>71</sup> James Roosevelt Bayley, *Memoirs of the Right Reverend Simon William Bruté* (New York: J. D. Sadlier, 1861), 85; Schauinger, *Stephen T. Badin*, 232-46; Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions*, 395-97; McAvoy, *Catholic Church in Indiana*, 180-87; McDonald, *1881 History*, 21; Winter, box 2, folder six, items 1 and 4, Winter Collection; Clifton, *Prairie People*, 229-30.



required mutual agreement, even though the balance of power was tipping decidedly in favor of the United States by the early nineteenth century. The Potawatomi's decision not to cede all of their land in Michigan in 1826 compelled the federal government to respect the tribe's rights, although it was generally acknowledged that Native land rights in the area were based more on "possession than prescription."<sup>72</sup> An exasperated Tipton expressed his frustrations about the contradictory nature of U.S. policies and principles during the shift toward removal: "Can Congress pass a law to give away Indian land[?] I think not. They can give away the public domain."<sup>73</sup> Yet the Potawatomi realized that American expansion could not be totally stopped, and so they devised a way to direct the manner in which it occurred. The "civilized" *wkamek* stood up to U.S. expansionism; they preserved their rights and reservations, while providing for their people and accommodating American ambitions. Their diplomatic victory, though temporary within Indiana, is still evident in maps today. So-called Michigan Road Sections are sequentially numbered from north to south, and they interrupt the layout of townships later surveyed throughout northern Indiana in the 1830s.<sup>74</sup> For a time, America literally had to develop around Potawatomi reservations like water flowing around stones in the middle of a stream.

The decision of village leaders to agree to construct such a major road on and around their lands was a crucial element in the creation of the "civilized" band. The Michigan Road, along with its integrated wagon routes and trails, helped determine the band alliance's configuration because it guided interaction among the various Native settlements. Moreover, the flow of supplies influenced the development and status of the various villages. Adapting to an encroaching American society gave the Potawatomi who did so greater control over the external changes affecting them. Thus, the decision to allow construction of the Michigan Road ultimately determined band

---

<sup>72</sup> Cass, Ray, and Tipton to Barbour, October 23, 1826.

<sup>73</sup> John Tipton to Calvin Fletcher, December 2, 1830, *Tipton Papers*, ed. Robertson and Riker, 2: 377.

<sup>74</sup> Today, U.S. 31 connects cities in southwestern Michigan to Indianapolis, Ind., and follows the same general route as the Michigan Road. There are slight divergences just south of the present-day city of Plymouth, Ind., where the original Michigan Road route is now a country road called "Old Michigan Road." The interruption of township configurations in Indiana by Michigan Road sections can be seen on General Land Office survey maps of the 1820s and 1830s as well as modern United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps. General Land Office survey maps are housed at the State of Indiana Archives in Indianapolis, and county surveyor's offices for the relevant counties.



affiliations, while contributing to the development of a syncretized identity within the villages along the road.

The Michigan Road band members' emerging distinctiveness as a group was in stark contrast to those settlements in the Tippecanoe River valley whose leaders did not systematically engage the "civilization" policy. These Potawatomi were more amenable to removal.

These smaller villages located throughout the Tippecanoe River valley ceded the Potawatomi reservations in Michigan and Indiana at the Treaty of Chicago in 1833, and then confirmed the cessions at a subsequent conference at Lake Keewaunay (now Bruce Lake, Indiana) in 1836. The *wkamek* of these villages had rejected "civilization" as a strategy for resistance, and so they literally had nothing to lose. They were in want of food and supplies, had suffered a decline in population, and were losing more and more land to white squatters every day. As a result, they had few assets to tie them to the region. The Michigan Road band, on the other hand, had a great deal to lose because of the decisions its members had made. Their settlements were nearly self-sufficient, and the population was stable (if not growing). The band had acquired many assets—livestock, cabins, fences, chapels, mills—through hard work, diplomacy, and a shared resolve to accept the "civilizing" policy and avoid removal. The Michigan Road facilitated this band's opposition to removal. Unhappily, this resistance did not protect the Indiana settlements from forcible removal by U.S. agents leading state militias. Dubious treaties signed by other Potawatomi gave them the pretense, albeit thin, that they needed to act.<sup>75</sup>

The present-day Pokagon Band of Potawatomi (headquartered in Dowagiac, Michigan) survived largely because of its location and willingness to adapt. The band gained stability by appropriating American-style agricultural technology and techniques, as well as some functional aspects of an acculturated lifestyle, namely the acquisition of trade goods for domestic use (e.g., tableware, cookware, and various household items). The consequence for band members was good relations with their white neighbors and the Territory and State (after 1837) of Michigan. The band secured an exemption from the removal requirement written into the Treaty of Chicago in 1833. A supplemental clause allowed the Potawatomi of Michigan to remain within the territory because of their "religious creed."<sup>76</sup> As secretary of war under Andrew Jackson,

---

<sup>75</sup> Edmunds, "Designing Men Seeking a Fortune," 109-22; idem, "George Winter," 32-33.

<sup>76</sup> Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Affairs*, 2: 413.



Lewis Cass in 1838 ordered a round-up of the Indiana Potawatomi in a bid to forcibly remove them. Indiana state militias succeeded in this task, but they stopped short of the Michigan border because it was out of their jurisdiction. Potawatomi living in Indiana who had banded together with Pokagon and his followers fled their villages using the Michigan Road as an escape route into Michigan. They evaded military dragnets and crossed the state line. Pokagon's village became a haven for these refugees from removal. When Michigan militia units from Detroit under the command of General Hugh Brady finally came for Pokagon and his Potawatomi, the *wkama* had already obtained a letter from Michigan Supreme Court Justice Epaphroditus Ransom. The letter stated that if any Potawatomi were removed from Michigan, a costly legal proceeding would ensue aimed at Brady and the Detroit Indian Agency. A *writ of habeas corpus* would be issued requiring the return of the Catholic Potawatomi to Michigan. Federal and state authorities ultimately abandoned their attempt at forced eviction.<sup>77</sup>

On August 20, 1839, federal envoy Isaac S. Ketchum from the Detroit Indian Agency visited the largest Potawatomi settlements located in southwestern Michigan. He tried to persuade the state's bands to remove voluntarily. But the Potawatomi knew how to live in this eastern environment, and they had spent many years adapting to the American presence. There was no logical reason for these Potawatomi to relocate to the West. At a conference held on the Nottawaseppi Prairie, just east of Dowagiac, a Potawatomi leader explained the situation and the band's rights in a clear and defiant tone: "Now, there are a great many whites that want us to stay here. They hunt with us and we divide the game, and when we hunt together and get tired we can go to the white men's houses and stay. We wish to stay among the whites, and we wish to be connected with them, and therefore we will not go."<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Hugh Brady, February 26, 1840; Joel R. Poinsett to Hugh Brady, February 26, 1840; Joel R. Poinsett to Hugh Brady, March 14, 1840; Hugh Brady to Joel R. Poinsett, March 19, 1840; Hugh Brady to General Scott, April 7, 1840; Hugh Brady to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 24, 1840, Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881, M21, microfilm, roll 28, frames 138-39; Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1889, M6, microfilm, rolls 21, 22, frames 456, 39; M-234, microfilm, roll 361, all in RG 393, vols. 18-81, 18-21, NARA; Clifton, *Pokagons*, 72; Grant Foreman, *The Last Trek of the Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 109-10.

<sup>78</sup> *White Pigeon Republican*, August 28, 1839. See *Historical Collections of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society* (Lansing: The Society, 1886), 10: 172, which reprints the original newspaper article.



Because of their defiance and refusal to leave, the federal government denied the Native heritage of Michigan's Potawatomi for nearly 150 years after the removal era. However, the Pokagon Band and the historically related Nottawaseppi and Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish bands (respectively headquartered in Athens and Dorr, Michigan) ultimately regained recognition in the 1990s, validating a struggle for identity that began with the seemingly innocuous Michigan Road. It was a road that divided a tribe but united a band. It fostered differentiation among Potawatomi villages and explains why some succumbed to removal and went west into Kansas, while others remained in the east and are still found in Michigan.<sup>79</sup>

Ben Secunda successfully defended his dissertation, "In the Shadow of the Eagle's Wings: The Effects of Removal on the Unremoved Potawatomi," at the University of Notre Dame in April 2008.

---

<sup>79</sup> A history of federal recognition for the Pokagon, Nottawaseppi, and Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish bands of Potawatomi in Michigan can be found at their websites and in files held in their tribal offices. On the Pokagon Band, see <http://www.pokagon.com/>. For information on the Nottawaseppi Band, see <http://www.nhbpi.com/>. On the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band, see <http://www.mbp.org/>. Accessed on April 19, 2008.