

ONEIDA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF WISCONSIN

The logo of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin incorporates cultural symbolism long predating European contact. Contained within the variegated hues of this contemporary adaptation are many individual symbols of great significance to the Oneida People. The following brief explanation addresses these symbols.

The very shape of the logo is in itself significant. Being round, it represents the cyclical world-view traditionally espoused by the Oneidas. Within the border are the words, "Sovereign Nation of the Oneida." Inherent within the culture, and based in treaty and other legal relationships, the Oneidas continue to comprise a Nation with retained rights and governmental integrity. At the bottom of the circle is the year 1822. That year marks a treaty between the Menominee Nation and the Oneidas who had departed their New York homelands.

At top center, one sees two concentric circles. These represent our eldest brother, the Sun, and our grandmother, the Moon. Flying highest of all the birds one sees the Eagle who is ever watchful. Beneath him is the Tree of Peace, symbol of the Iroquois Confederacy of which Oneida is one nation. At the base of the Tree is a turtle: symbol of the Great Turtle Island (the North American continent), and also one of the three clans of the Oneidas. The wolf and bear comprise the other two clans.

The four roots on the turtle's back go to the four directions, and remind the people that whoever would seek the peace, protection and solace of the Confederacy need only follow the roots back to their source. The weapons, appearing beneath the turtle, signify that they were buried beneath the tree—another affirmation of peace. The bound arrows have yet additional significance, however, in that there are six, i.e. the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy.

The Oneidas are a proud people. They fought on behalf of the Colonies in the Revolutionary War, and fought for America in every subsequent war. The Oneida Nation was among the first allies of a fledgling United States, and though now scattered from New York to Canada to Wisconsin as a result of the throes of history, it is clear that the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin has maintained its cultural knowledge, its pride in its heritage, and its awareness of its traditional legacy and responsibility to the people. The logo signifies that knowledge and that pride.



THE GARDENER: DANIEL BREAD AND THE PLANTING OF THE ONEIDA NATION IN WISCONSIN, 1828-1848*

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Daniel Bread (1800-1873) was the central figure in the early history of the Oneida Indians in Wisconsin. Indeed, the translation of his Oneida name was "the plant that grew without being planted."¹ Although Eleazer Williams, the lay catechist and Mohawk missionary, is usually "credited" with bringing the Oneidas to Wisconsin, Bread was the loudest and most articulate voice defending tribal interests at a critical time for these American Indians caused by their removal from New York State and adjustment to new surroundings. George Catlin described Bread in 1831, after they had met in Washington, D.C., and after the artist had painted the Oneida leader: "He is a shrewd and talented man, well educated—speaking good English—is handsome, and a polite and gentlemanly man in his deportment."² Despite arriving in Wisconsin in 1828, Bread became the leader against the so-called "Stambaugh Treaty," the federal-Menominee treaty of 1831.³ He expressed outrage because his Oneida Nation had been bypassed and ignored in the treaty process. This "treaty" led to the "readjustment" of the "New York Indians'" lands, including those of the Oneidas. As a young activist, he took his case directly to President Andrew Jackson, going head-to-head with Old Hickory.

Bread's meteoric rise to power came about as a result of the power vacuum caused by the chaotic nature of Oneida politics in the half-century after the American Revolution. As a young man with great oratorical skills, he came to the fore just at the time of Oneida emigration to Wisconsin. Although half Oneida by birth, he had been adopted into the prominent Bread family as a youth. One of his step ancestors was the famous Peter Bread, an Oneida Indian hero of the Saratoga Campaign during the American Revolution.⁴ In the War of 1812, despite being only fourteen years of age, Daniel Bread also earned military accolades. He participated with the Oneida force of one hundred twenty riflemen who defeated the British navy at the Battle of Sandy Creek on May 30, 1814, in a historically neglected but important military engagement of the war that helped the Americans break the British blockade of Sackett's Harbor and Lake Ontario.⁵ His early military service, his recognition among the Oneidas as "a great orator," and his early association with Eleazer Williams all contributed to his quick attainment of leadership among the Oneidas, more specifically among the First Christian Party since the Oneida Nation had little cohesion and central leadership in the years before and immediately after their migration-removal to Wisconsin.⁶

Shortly after the end of the War of 1812, Bishop John Henry Hobart of the Episcopal church appointed Williams as a lay reader and catechist and, in 1817, a missionary to the Oneida Indians. An eccentric man with elaborate goals and unrealistic fantasies, Williams expanded a plan first proposed by Jedidiah Morse, the famous minister, geographer, and congressman, to resettle the Six Nations from New York State in Wisconsin, then Michigan Territory. Williams led delegations of the Iroquois and other Indians from New York State to Green Bay in 1820-1822 where treaties were negotiated with the Menominees and Winnebagos, securing millions of acres of land and settlements in the Fox River Valley at Little Chute and along Duck Creek near Green Bay.⁷

Faced with increasing pressures for their central New York lands and social disintegration caused by alcohol and poverty, and finding themselves with no protector in either Washington or Albany, Williams' scheme for an ecclesiastic empire in the West insulated from the effects of frontier whites became more attractive to Oneidas. In 1817, Williams had won influence among the First Christian Party, the Oneida faction to which the young Bread was associated. By 1821, Bread was signing receipts as a "chief" of the First Christian Party.⁸ By 1824, his name appears on state-Indian land "treaties" ceding Oneida lands.⁹

According to Jack Campisi, when the representatives of the First and Second Christian Parties and the Orchard Party arrived in Wisconsin, "their leaders took a place in the political structure basing their legitimacy on chiefly prerogatives attained in New York. Campisi added that what resulted "was a political system of twelve hereditary chiefs and a variable

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southward so that the quality of land that they received was substantially improved. The time of apportionment of the one hundred acres was subsequently changed from three years and left to the discretion of the president of the United States. This apportionment later occurred in 1838. In 1836, faced with pressures from John Freeman Schermerhorn, federal Indian commissioner, a Reformed Church missionary, and zealot and strong proponent of Jacksonian Indian policy, the Oneida landbase shrank again, to an eight by twelve mile reservation of slightly more than 65,000 acres, or about one hundred acres per Oneida person, formally confirmed in a federal treaty of May 17, 1838. Prior to this, in January, 1838, the Six Nations, at the Buffalo Creek treaty, renounced all other claims to lands in and around Green Bay and throughout Wisconsin.²¹

The Menominees attempted to overthrow the treaties of 1821 and 1822 which they interpreted as fraudulent in providing a vast empire to the "New York Indians." Yet, it should be noted that this vast empire was not just for Oneida, Stockbridge, and Brothertown Indians, but was purposefully large to encourage all of the Six Nations in New York to emigrate to Wisconsin, a scheme of the Ogden Land Company, one that satisfied the United States' as well as New York's Indian policies of the age. The Menominees under Chief Oshkosh swore that they as a community of Indians had never sold their land or received anything from it. It was at this time that Bread assumed the reins of Oneida leadership and eloquently presented these Iroquois Indians' case. The whittling down of the original accord produced real fears among the Oneidas that their New York experience with dispossession would reoccur in Wisconsin. In the words of the great Yogi Berra, it was *deja vu* all over again. If ever-increasing Iroquois numbers would arrive in Wisconsin to be resettled, would there be room for all? At a time of growing tensions between Winnebagos and whites in the lead district and a frontier trader setting with all of its attendant evils (such as alcohol) just a few miles away at Green Bay, Oneidas feared for their future in a new but often strange land since they were viewed by their Indian neighbors and their French husbands as "interlopers."²²

On June 7, 1830, President Andrew Jackson appointed three commissioners to establish the boundaries for the "accommodation and settlement of the New York Indians."²³ The three commissioners—Erastus Root, James McCall, and John T. Mason—were generally sympathetic to the Menominees and Winnebagos. Influenced by their official instructions written by Secretary of War John Eaton, they concluded that the New York Indians were essentially agricultural and therefore did not need as much land as the hunting and gathering Winnebagos and Menominees. Indeed, Eaton suggested that the so-called "New York Indians" could easily survive on 131,640 acres of land or 54 acres per individual.²⁴ The commissioners, who hired Albert G. Ellis, Eleazer Williams' assistant and editor of one of the Green Bay newspapers, as an official surveyor for the commission, met throughout the summer of 1830 with various Indian communities.²⁵ The Menominees under Oshkosh and Josette Carron and the Winnebagos under Four Legs vehemently articulated their position in favor of reducing the Oneida cession.²⁶ On August 21, the representative of the "New York Indians" insisted (1) that no Indian council be held within Green Bay's limits; (2) that only the federal commissioners and Indian delegates and chiefs be admitted to council; and (3) finally, that a code of secrecy be observed during the deliberations. Two days later, the commissioners rejected all three points.²⁷ The Oneidas were blind to the nefarious activities of the American Fur Company which lusted over the lands ceded to the New York Indians. Nor were they cognizant of the power structure that dominated Green Bay society—the Lawes, Whitneys, and Dotys.²⁸ Instead, their great fear were the French traders among the Menominees. The Oneidas insisted that they had "better manners, more virtue and more religion of the Christian name, than some white citizens who now occupy large territories in the new settlements of the United States."²⁹

On August 24, the Oneidas, represented by Bread, Neddy Otsiquette, Henry Powles, Cornelius Steven, and John Antony, met with the commissioners at Green Bay. Unaware of the protocol of Iroquois diplomacy, the commissioners passed around the calumet before the meeting commenced. The Oneida delegates insisted that the treaty of 1822 was a valid contract. They blamed the situation on the Menominees and the "current complaints of the French people" at and around Green Bay who had unusual influence among these Indians.³⁰ The next day, Bread and the Stockbridge leader J. W. Quinney wrote that they had concerns about the commission's interpreter and once again mentioned what they saw as the improper influence of outsiders, presumably the French traders at Green Bay who included the powerful and well-connected Grignons, intermarried with the Indians.³¹ On August 28, Bread, described as "one of the Oneida chiefs," referred to the Menominees and Winnebagos as "brothers," claiming that all the Oneidas wanted was *peace and goodwill* among the Indian nations. He went further by suggesting compromise by allowing Oneidas to have a better, more concentrated landbase.³² On September 1, Judge Doty, the white attorney for the Menominees, maintained that the United States had no responsibility to repair an injustice done to the Indians in New York State by strong-arming the Menominees.³³ Hoping to get at these Menominee lands, Doty and his Green Bay associates became the outspoken defenders of the local Menominees against the interests of the "New York Indians." By this time the commissioners had basically worked out a proposal, one not acceptable to the Oneidas, that assured them "fixed and reasonable agricultural limits."³⁴

The commissioners' work, which favored the Menominees and Winnebagos, was aided by the actions of Colonel Stambaugh, the interim Menominee agent, who pleaded these Indians' position with the secretary of war and aided in drawing up the federal treaty of 1831. He became the Menominees' major advocate and, at the same time, the great foe of

At this meeting Daniel Bread (for the first time in my presence) spoke in his native language and Mr. Williams was his interpreter. To our great astonishment and in the face of his voluntary agreement when before the President, he refused absolutely to consent to any arrangements unless the Government would guarantee and assure to them two hundred thousand acres on the south side of the tract of 500,000 acres set apart by the treaty of last year: In vain did I remind him of his own voluntary agreement, and of the consequences which must inevitably result if his present course were persisted in:—A repetition of all former arguments was used:—that the Government had no claim to this land; that it belonged to the Menominees: that I have assured him of this two weeks before, and that the Government could not undertake to grant to them what they did not possess: That he had remarked himself that he no doubt, they could make an exchange with the Menominees if the President would advise them to do so; that he had agreed to do so; and that from all I could learn there would be no difficulty in accomplishing it: To all that I could say, we heard little or nothing more by way of answer than that he had no faith in the Government; that they had made promises time after time: and he was determined to submit their claims to the justice of the Senate of the United States. The stand here taken and the language, *as interpreted*, being so different from any thing previously used.

Porter, concerned, asked Williams to meet with Bread privately. Williams, it appears, urged compromise, fearing that Bread's recalcitrance might lead to reprisals. Porter then described:⁴²

The President remarked 'well, set apart 200 acres for each family, which is more than you will ever cultivate, there will be 200,000 acres and upwards left;—can't be supposed that there is not 200,000 acres of good land in this large tract of country?'—Some conversations then took place among the Indians themselves. After which Daniel Bread remarked that 'he wished to have an end to their disputes- . . . and made no other reply.'

Porter then concluded that Bread "understood the President to say that the lands should be exchanged as desired—thereby pledging the faith of the Government to him, to effect the exchange with the Menominees."⁴³ Although the Oneidas did not win an overall victory, they did achieve recognition by the president that their lands be exchanged for better, more fertile lands in the southern part of Menominee territory, no small achievement in the Age of Jackson. Yet, fears of uncertainty still remained among the Oneidas since both Washington and Albany were not to be fully trusted.

Afterwards, to win political acceptance among the Oneidas, Bread played a careful game, presenting himself as the great defender of Oneida interests and bad-mouthing the French traders and Métis at Green Bay as well as the Menominee leadership. Throughout the decade of the 1830s, he cooperated with George Boyd, the Indian agent at Green Bay, whose pro-Oneida, anti-Catholic, anti-French, anti-Menominee views were clearly noticeable in his writings and his actions. Bread supported schools and western education and western public health efforts such as vaccination for his people, cooperating with Boyd at every turn.⁴⁴ In 1836, when the federal government under the nefarious Indian treaty negotiator John Schermerhorn renewed efforts to cut the Oneida landbase in Wisconsin, Bread made clear his open opposition to "mingle in council with the Menominee" and other Indians. "We have nothing to do in conjunction with them. The Oneida Nation must therefore be regarded as standing alone."⁴⁵

In 1838, the Oneida landbase was reduced to slightly more than 65,000 acres. Although accused by his political enemies, the so-called Missouri or Emigrating Party, of financially benefiting by controlling the distribution of government annuities and advocating too much acceptance of white man's ways in the late 1830s, by 1840 Bread had become second to none in the Oneida polity in Wisconsin.⁴⁶

By 1848, Bread was described as a sachem, living in a "spacious, double house painted white and set back a considerable distance from the road," although his residence, like many other Oneida residences, had no trees to protect it from the "noonday sun," nor steps to bring a guest up to his front door easily.⁴⁷ Although largely powerless in the face of American interests of the time period, his great presence and oratory helped the Oneidas articulate their position in Wisconsin and become rooted in the West. Fear of another removal and uncertainty of both his Indian and non-Indian neighbors were the great motivations after he arrived in Wisconsin where he found a similar chaotic situation that had beset the Oneida polity in New York State. Fearing a repeat of the situation that led to removal to Wisconsin, he fervently worked to rebuild the Oneida Indian community. Working with the local Indian agent and advocating a course of acculturation, he attempted to prevent another Oneida removal, although it spurred a movement of opposition that called for emigration. By the end of the decade of the 1840s, with the beginning of Wisconsin statehood, the Oneidas had much greater roots in Wisconsin, and Daniel Bread, in many ways, was the leading Oneida gardener, planting the seeds of a new home.

He visited Albany and Washington several times on the business of the tribe always learning something valuable on those visits. He regarded Gen. Jackson, Daniel Webster and Silas Wright as being the greatest men he ever saw. His disposition when not crossed was very kind and peaceable. When aroused to anger or jealousy it was, on the contrary, most harsh and implacable. As a friend he would exert himself earnestly to help; as an enemy he left no means of injury untried. His mental and physical abilities were naturally of the very highest order; a narrow sphere of action confined the former while some unfortunate excesses injured the latter.

On a wider stage he would have been one of the greatest of men; with better opportunities and surroundings he would have been one of the best of men. He leaves a large number of children and grandchildren as well as great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren to mourn his loss. The Oneidas are honored in having had such a man of the pure Indian blood amongst them, and as time elapses they will more and more think of his high qualities. This is but a slight sketch of some outlines of his long and useful life. A most profitable and interesting volume might be made from the record of the events, circumstances, speeches and acts of his busy career. A FRIEND.

For the Green Bay Advocate.

Daniel Bread.

This Indian Chief died on the 21st day of July, A. D. 1877 at Oneida, Wisconsin.

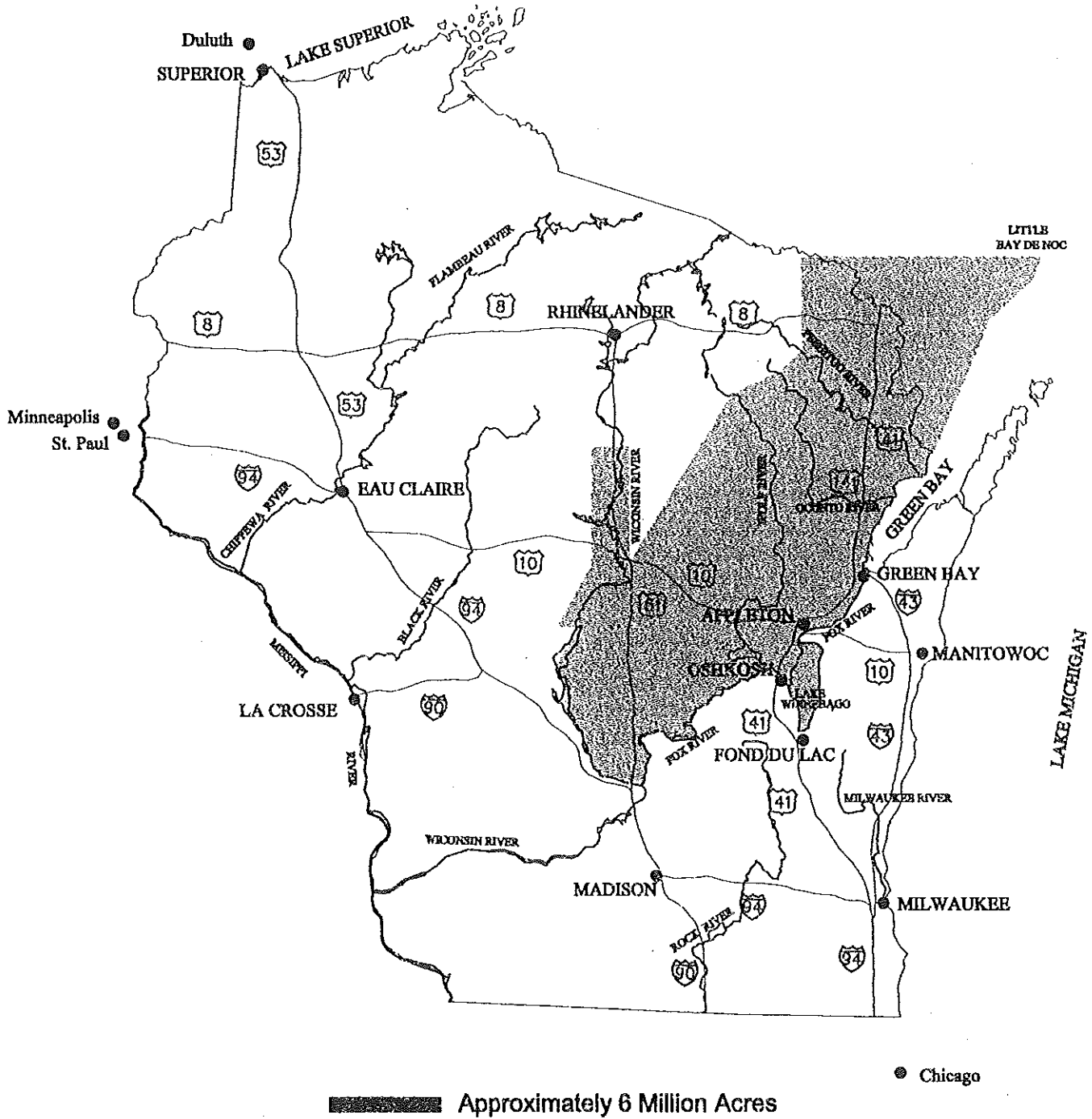
He was born at Oneida, N. Y. near the present location of Oneida Depot, in the month of March, A. D. 1790. The Indians named him *Tsah-wah-tah-nah-wah*, "The plant that grew without being planted." In the strict sense of the word he was never a regularly constituted chief, but worked his way by his own exertions, good behavior, and great natural abilities to the first place in the Oneida Tribe. He was the second son of an Indian by the name of Williams, who was in no way distinguished in the tribe. His father died while he was a child, and an Indian by the name of Daniel Bread adopted him and gave him his own name. His adopted father was an educated man, and taught young Daniel some small rudiments of knowledge, while he attended the school of the two daughters of the Missionary, Rev. Mr. Jenkins. Daniel made more advancement in the branches of reading, writing and arithmetic than any other of the Indian boys; and soon became book keeper for the tribe. In 1810 he went on a expedition with about sixty of the tribe to Sandy Creek, near Oswego, and there fought a bloody battle with the invading British, helping to drive them from our free soil. Soon after this exploit he made his first speech to the Indians, which at once gave him a position as one of the leading men.

About the year 1818 Eleazar Williams, the half-breed grandson of the youngest daughter of Rev. Mr. Williams, who with his whole family was taken captive by the Canada Indians at Deerfield, Mass., in 1704, advocated the sale of the Oneida Reserve in New York and the removal of the tribe to Wisconsin.

Young Bread entered into this scheme with great energy, and after awhile mostly through his efforts it was accomplished in part. After the removal to Wisconsin, Bread became the head man of the Oneidas settled here, and made himself a necessary party to every transaction. He soon became rich, and expended his money most liberally for the benefit of the tribe, establishing a store, blacksmith shop and shoe shop, amongst them, while at the same time feasting them every Christmas Day and Fourth of July, at which times he took occasion to address them in long speeches for their instruction and encouragement. He also acted as Lay Reader on Sunday, being a fine reader and an excellent singer.

His ideas of God and Religion were straightforward and sensible; he maintaining that God must be the most reasonable of beings, who desires the happiness of men; and that men bring most of their troubles upon themselves by wilfully disobeying the laws of God.

ONEIDA TERRITORY 6 MILLION ACRES (1823)

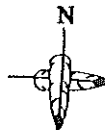


GEOGRAPHIC LAND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

N7332 Water Circle Place
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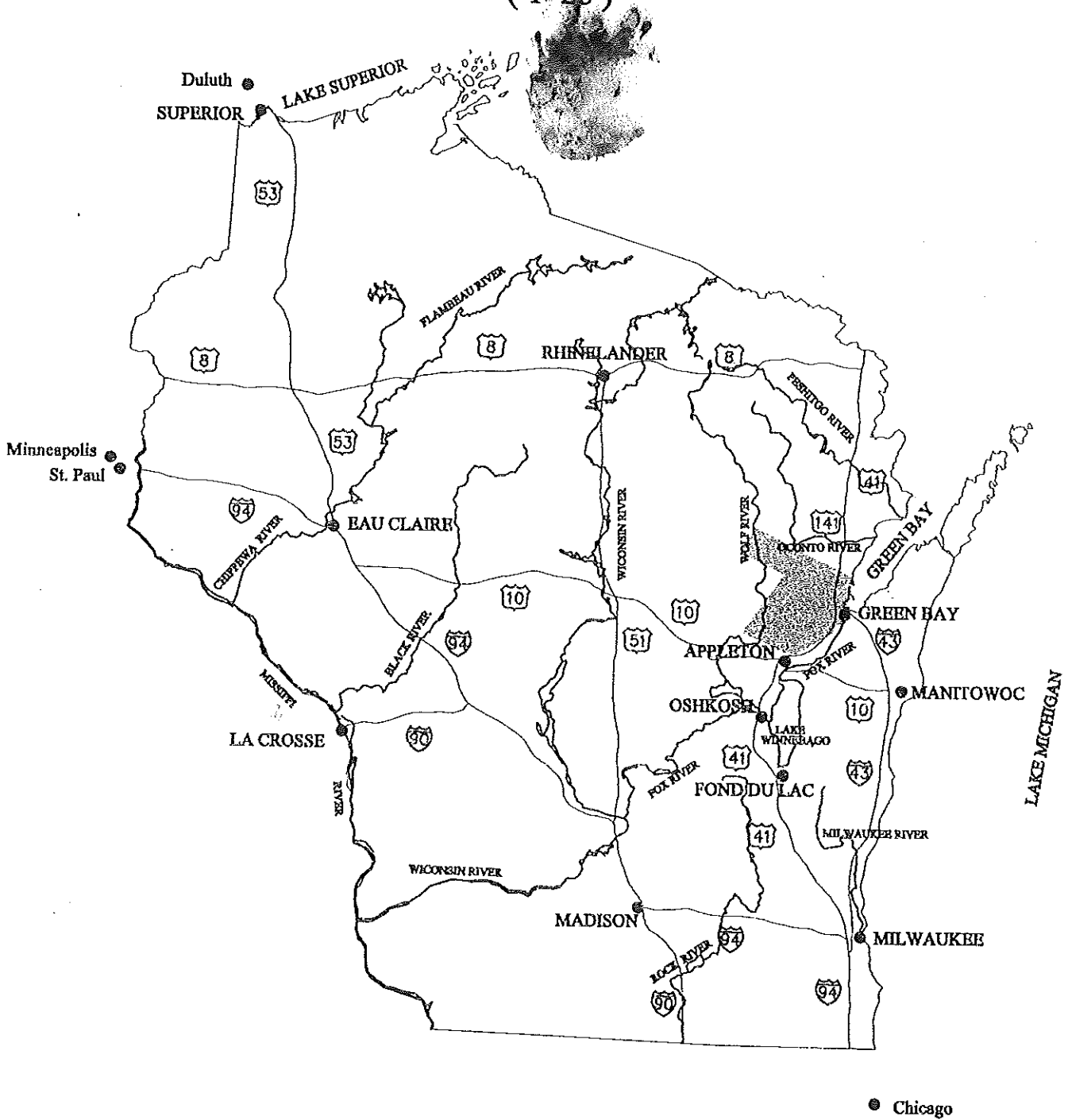
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ONEIDA TERRITORY 500 THOUSAND ACRES (1828)



● Chicago

█ Approximately 500 Thousand Acres

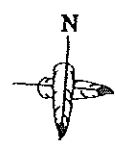


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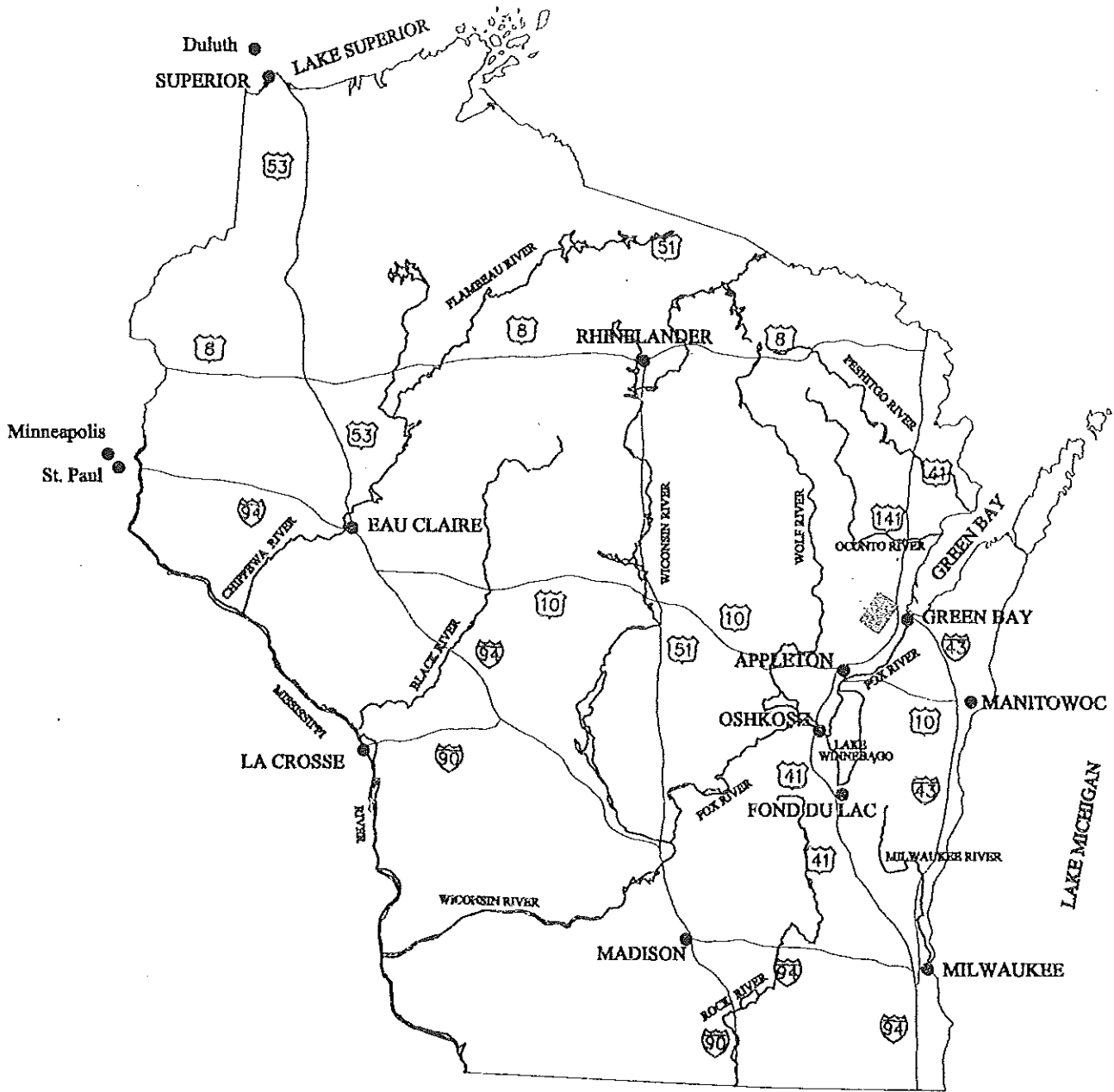
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ONEIDA 1838 TREATY TERRITORY



● Chicago

1838 Treaty Boundary 65,730 Acres

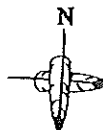


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DATE: 6/15/94

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