

WISCONSIN
PLACE NAME LEGENDS



WISCONSIN INDIAN PLACE LEGENDS

FOLKLORE SECTION, FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECTS

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FOREWORD

The object of this monograph is to place within the easy reach of persons interested in Wisconsin folklore and folk customs a selected collection of Wisconsin Indian Place Legends assembled by the Folklore Section of the Wisconsin Federal Writers' Projects. It is desired that they shall prove useful to persons interested in storytelling, in the writing and production of plays and pageants, in song, poetry and story writing, in industrial art and mural painting.

Some of these legends and myths have been collected from original Indian sources and have not heretofore appeared in print. Others are reprinted from past publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Archeological Society and from a number of privately printed books and pamphlets. These latter are not generally accessible to most citizens of Wisconsin.

The present collection of legends and myths represents but a small number of the most noteworthy of the Indian Place Legends of Wisconsin. The total number of legends of this particular class surviving in Wisconsin at the present time is not as large as it should be because of the failure of early

residents of Wisconsin to collect and preserve others while there was an opportunity to do so. Through this neglect a rich heritage of Indian lore has undoubtedly been lost.

Our Wisconsin tribesmen had stories, myths, and legends about many of the springs, streams, lakes, prairies, woodlands, rocks, hills, and valleys of the regions, which were theirs in a broad domain of abundance and great scenic beauty. In the centuries of their occupation of their homeland, as a result of their life experiences and culture, a wealth of tales and legends became attached to many of the scenic landmarks of their environment. A knowledge of most of these is now lost to their descendants, long segregated by the government on restricted Indian reservations or confined to tracts of settled lands far from the regions occupied by their forefathers.

In regard to the group of place legends here presented it may be of interest to state that Indian folk have been long removed from many of the localities in Wisconsin with which these legends are identified, in some cases for nearly a century. These legends

are with design selected from localities scattered over the length and breadth of the state. They are of as varied a character as possible.

The editor will regard his labors well-rewarded if the publication of these Wisconsin Indian Place Legends may encourage others to assist in collecting and preserving more of the State's neglected treasure of Indian and white folklore and folk ways.

Charles E. Brown

State Director, Federal Writers' Projects

LAKE MICHIGAN

(Sauk Indian Legend)

In creating the world Gotei Munito placed a lot of small lakes where Lake Michigan (Ketcikum) now lies. These were of all sizes-some very large and some very small. After a while these lakes began to quarrel with each other-each wanted the best place for himself. This went on for some time. Then they finally decided to get together in a council to settle their disputes. The outcome of this meeting was that all the lakes, large and small, were merged into one great lake for the common good, and now, so the Indians say, we have Lake Michigan. This lake, although generally peaceful and quiet, sometimes gets very rough and wild. This occurs when some of the large and small lakes merged into the great lake become restless and turbulent because they wish to be free again.

WISAKA RACES THE BUFFALO

(Mascouten Myth)

The world had already existed for some time when Wisaka was born. He lived alone with his brother Yapatao and their grandmother Masukamigo Kwao, the Earthwoman.

Wisaka roamed all over the earth's surface killing many great serpents. At length all the surviving serpents gathered in a council. To this meeting they invited the Grandmother.

"Grandmother," said the Underworld Serpents, "your older grandson is abusing us badly, and we want to destroy him in some way."

"It is useless to try it," answered the old woman, "Wisaka is immortal. Yet, maybe you have the power to kill his younger brother."

So the serpents planned to kill the brother in revenge.

They challenged Wisaka to race a young buffalo. This was to get him out of the way. The race course was to encircle Keteikum (Lake Michigan). As soon as the contestants had rounded the opposite shore of the lake, the serpents attacked Yapatao, and Wisaka could hear his younger brother calling for help. Then

Wisaka ran all the faster. As he drew near home he could hear his younger brother calling again, "Oh, my older brother, Wisaka, they are killing me!"

Wisaka ran very fast. He passed the buffalo, but when he arrived at home it was too late; they had already killed his younger brother. They had skinned him and carried his hide away. Then Wisaka went into mourning. He blackened his face and attacked and killed the underworld monsters.

The track made by Wisaka and the buffalo in their race around Lake Michigan could once be plainly seen. At one time the Indians followed it as a trail in going to their villages or on war or hunting expeditions.

THE RED BANKS

(Green Bay Myth)

In the beginning Earthmaker created four men.

These four brothers were Munuga, Henanga, Hagaga, and Nanyiga. These first four he made chiefs of the Thunderbirds. He opened the heavens in order that they might see the earth. He gave them a tobacco plant, and he gave them fire. The earth was to be theirs to live upon. The four brothers flew down to earth and landed in the branches of a tree. This place was at Within Lake, at Red Banks on the shore of Green Bay. They then lit on the ground and began walking toward the east. There they selected a camp ground. There they started the first fire. One brother went to hunt for food. He took the bow and arrows which Earthmaker had given them and he killed and brought back a deer. Not having any cooking vessels, they roasted the meat over the fire on sharp sticks.

At this camp ground the Thunderers were joined by other clans. These obtained fire from them. The first to join them were the War clan people. They came from the west. Then came the Deer clan, the Snake clan, and the Elk clan. The Bear clan, the Fish clan, the

Water-spirit clan, and the Buffalo clan followed them. All of the other clans came. Together they formed a tribe, the Hochungara (Winnebago). They began to intermarry. The men of the upper clans married women of the lower clans. They cut poles and stripped bark from the trees and with these built wigwams. From clay mixed with slippery elm bark they made cooking vessels. They formed a village. The members of the upper clans were the chiefs. They organized a council lodge in which the members of each clan had their place.

In the beginning the Thunderers were very powerful. They made the valleys and the hills. With their clubs they made dents in the hills. They planted the tobacco, and with its crushed leaves, which they threw into the fire, they made offerings to Earthmaker. And Earthmaker gave to the Hochungara his blessings. (Winnebago)

THE LOST GIRLS

(Sturgeon Bay Legend)

A Menomini Indian family were living near Sturgeon Bay. In this family were two girls. These girls liked to play on the sandy shore of the bay and to swim in its waters. One day their father went to call for them but could neither see them or make them hear his calls. He found their footprints in the sand leading to the water. A big hairy snake lived in the waters of the bay. He had seized the children while they were swimming and had carried them away to his den under the water. The father was very sorrowful.

He resolved to ask the assistance of Manabus. For six days he fasted and prayed. At the end of his fast Manabus appeared to him in a dream. He told him not to worry more, that he would rescue and return the little girls.

Manabus summoned the Thunderers from their homes in the north. These great birds were the enemies of the hairy serpent. They dove into the water and found the white clay-plastered wigwam of the monster. They broke down the entrance to his den and killed the big snake. The children were within. They were safe; the serpent had not yet eaten them. They were returned

to their father's wigwam none the worse for their experience. Their parents were overcome with joy at their return and offered their thanks to Manabus.

Later the Indians could see a great cloud over the bay. That was the Thunderers carrying away the hairy snake. (Menominee)

PORT DES MORTS

(Death's Door Legend)

"In peace and plenty the Noquets had long lived on the shores of the islands of the Potawatomi chain at the head of the Green Bay Peninsula. Hunger they knew not. The lake was full of fish; in the wood was an abundance of deer, bear, turkeys, and pigeons; and flocks of ducks and geese frequented the lake and bays. Of all the islands, Washington was the great game preserve. Never did the great forests on its back refuse food to the hungry man. Hence, one day when a band of Potawatomi who resided on the neighboring point of Door County invaded the land of the Noquets while the latter were away, the spirit of trouble spread his mantle over the peaceful isles.

The Indian wanted a deed to the land, though he held no abstract purporting to show how it had passed from hand to hand down from the original grantor; nevertheless, his rage was quite as great as, if not greater than, would be that of his white brother if he found someone calmly appropriating for his own use the home he called his own.

The injury and insult must be wiped out. Fortunately or unfortunately, he had neglected to provide courts and lawyers. The poor redskin had recourse only to bloodshed.

War was declared by the simple process of the Noquet warriors embarking in canoes for a raid on the Potawatomi. But the medicine men were failures, or else the braves neglected, in their haste, to propitiate the manido, for they had only gone a portion of the four miles which separated them from their enemies when a breath of wind struck them, the forerunner of a hurricane which swept the waters in green masses over the frail craft.

Of all the brave band which went forth, not one was ever seen alive. To the wives, the mothers, the fathers waiting on the shore, no word came back. Day by day they gazed over the strait. And then their warriors came home to them. The bodies were found tossed up on the beach of Detroit Island, and friends and relatives could do no more than hurry them to hastily prepared graves. Here in this open space, so the story goes, they were interred." (George R. Fox)

THE WATER MONSTER

(Lake Winnebago Legend)

A very large fish (some say a sturgeon) lived in Lake Winnebago in the early days when the Winnebago had their villages on its shores. This monster had a great appetite for moose, elk, and deer. He lay in wait for them in the river channel where they were accustomed to swim from one side of the stream to the other. There he dragged them under the water and devoured them, horns, hide, hoofs, and all. Of course no Indian would cross the channel at that place.

After many years of such killings this huge fish was found by some Indians, floating on the surface of the water near the shore. He was quite dead, and in searching for the cause they found the large branching antler of an elk protruding from his stomach. He had eaten the elk, but because of its extraordinary size he had been unable to digest its horns.

The Indians believe that some of the descendants of this monster are even now inhabiting Lake Winnebago.

BUTTE DES MORTS

(Legends of the Hill of the Dead)

"Legends giving different locations as to the place where the 'great battle' was fought between rival Indian tribes are related by descendants of the early settlers of Butte des Morts. Most of these stories are probably true. Not one, but several battles have been fought in this territory between various tribes. The abundance of easily procurable food and other comforts supplied by the forests, marshes, and waters made this region highly attractive to the aborigines. Situated as it is on a through route of travel and known far and wide as a land of plenty, it is inevitable that there would be controversy among the rival tribes, followed by battle.

"Mas-pah-quo-to-noh"-Hill of the Dead-has always been revered as sacred ground by the Indians. Here were held elaborate and long-drawn-out ceremonies, and much medicine was made. Here were held the dances and feasts by which they celebrated seasonal events or inaugurated tribal activities. The stately mournful booming of the dance drum or the jolly rhythmic beat of the rattle and water drum led the cadence of their songs.

"Each nation, in turn, buried its dead on or near this hill. The bodies of those who perished away from home were brought back to Grand Butte and interred with fitting ceremony. Bundle burials show that the dead were not always brought back the same season. The fact that they were eventually brought back and buried here indicated conclusively the veneration in which this ground was held by these people. M'Nepoose was here! M'Nepoose would watch over his children! " (George E. Overton)

The Hill of the Dead, here referred to, was situated near the shore of Butte des Morts Lake, west of Oshkosh.

BIG FOOT'S TRACKS

(Lake Geneva Story)

Big Foot was the chief of the Potawatomi village located in 1831 where Fontana is now situated at the western end of beautiful Lake Geneva. This lake bears his name on some early maps. The name "Meunguzt" was given to the chief by a relative.

On one occasion Big Foot was out hunting in the winter time. The snow on the frozen lake surface was about eighteen inches deep, and the chief was wearing snowshoes to facilitate his progress. While trudging along he came upon the tracks of a deer. It was running and was being chased by a wolf.

The running deer followed the shore of the lake, and the hunter followed its tracks. After traveling quite a distance he came to the fallen deer. The wolf had killed it but had abandoned his prey because of the approaching hunter. Big Foot returned to his Lake Geneva village with the deer across his shoulders.

His brother-in-law, who was also out on the lake on some mission, came upon the large deep tracks which Big Foot had made and followed them to the Indian village.

When he learned that these were tracks made by

the chief he jokingly gave to him the name "Maunguzet"
 (big foot), and this name ever afterwards clung to
 Big Foot. (Potawatomi)

THE TERROR OF THE ROCK ^{no}

(Rock River Myth)

The Winnebago Indians say that when their people and the Prairie Indians (Potawatomi) camped on the banks of the Rock River, there lived in that stream a huge and terrible water monster. This water demon the old people describe as a long-tailed animal with horns on its head, great jaws and claws, and a body like a big snake. It ranged over the whole length of the stream from its mouth to the foot of Lake Koshkonong. It preyed upon both animals and men, seeming to prefer one no more than the other. Hapless deer that went to the banks of the river to drink or walked out into the water were seized and swallowed by the monster, horns and all. At the fording places of the river this demon especially hunted for victims. Indians crossing at these places were dragged down out of sight beneath the water and were never seen again. Canoes in the river were sometimes overturned by its limbs or a slap of its tail and their occupants submerged and lost. Only a few people ever saw this water monster, but its presence in the river was known by the churning and boiling of the water.

In the spring time its movement in the river broke up the ice and heaped it against the river banks. Its

dens were in the deep places. There it slept and devoured its victims. Some Indians believed that there were several of these water monsters in the Rock River. Offerings of tobacco and various articles were cast into the river to appease their wrath when they were angry. These preserved the lives of many people.

When the Indians ceased to camp in numbers along the Eneenneshunnuck (river of big stones) after the white men came, these water demons also left the river. Some Indians thought that they established dens in the Mississippi River where they are today. (Winnebago)

THE WATER MONSTER OF LAKE KOSHKONONG

Many years ago the Mascouten, or Prairie Potawatomi had villages on the shores of Lake Koshkonong. A water monster of great power and terrible form dwelt in its depths and made havoc with every Indian canoe. No Indian dared to attempt to cross the lake from shore to shore even in mild weather; because of fear of this destructive denizen of its waters. No white men came to grief; the lake passage was unlucky for redmen only.

"Near the narrows of the lake rises a high rocky hill, and near it there is an island on which the Indians camped when trapping muskrats. On the west side of the hill there was a place where no Indian could cross. All who attempted it were sure to be drowned."

Once there were two Potawatomi brothers who concluded that the story of the water monster was false. One day, starting in opposite directions, they set out to navigate the lake in their canoes. All the Indians watched them in fear. They expected that they would never be seen again. Soon a big wind arose, and it was so strong and fierce that it even blew the ducks that were flying overhead into the water. The Indians in the camp sang sacred songs for the well-being of the two boys, but night came and they did not return.

The two canoes were later found capsized. After some time several white men told the Potawatomi that they had found the bodies of the boys floating in the lake. There was white clay in their nostrils and ears, a sure sign that the Lake Koshkonong monster had caught them and drowned them. Some Indians are afraid of the waters of Lake Koshkonong to this day believing that the water monster still prowls about its shores.

Before the Potawatomi came, Indians of the Sauk tribe lived on the shore of this lake. They had enemies, probably the Illinois, who once trapped a number of them on an island. They were unable to escape, as the island was partly surrounded by a large swamp. The Sauk were here exterminated by the arrows of the enemy, and some also perished through starvation. This happening gave the lake a bad name. (Mascouten)

THE SPIRIT RACCOON
(Lake Mendota Legend)

Many centuries ago two Winnebago hunters near the ford of the Yahara (Catfish) River at Lake Monona saw in the sandy soil the tracks of an animal, unmistakably those of a raccoon. They were of unusually large size. The hunters followed them to a wooded point on the eastern shore of Lake Mendota, at present known as Maple Bluff. Here the raccoon had found a hiding place in a hollow log. One of the Indians fitted an arrow into his bowstring and was about to shoot when the animal called to him in human language and besought him not to shoot. It informed him that it was a "spirit" animal and that a dire calamity would befall him if he killed it. The Indian wisely desisted. The other hunter had no such scruples. He said that he did not care whether it was a spirit raccoon (which he did not believe) or not; he was going to kill it, as he was very hungry. So he shot and killed the animal. He skinned and cut up the raccoon, then built a fire and roasted its flesh. Of this he ate heartily, his friend refusing to partake of this feast.

The day being warm, the two Indians lay down under a tree and slept. After a while, the Indian who had eaten the flesh of the "spirit" raccoon awoke. He was very

thirsty and descended to a large spring once located at the base of the bluff. Kneeling at its rim, he began to drink its water. The more he drank, the more thirsty he became. Finally, his thirst became so intense that in desperation he waded out into the lake. As soon as the water rose above his middle, his dreadful thirst ceased. It returned again the moment he ventured into shallower water or tried to go ashore. In the lake he was obliged to remain until night came, and he then sank into its waters. He was transformed into a fish. His hunter friend stood on the lake bank but was unable to help him.

For many years Indians camping near this bluff have heard after dark, in the deep water, the splashing of a great fish--the unfortunate Indian-- followed by the beating of a war drum and the singing of his war song.

From this legend Lake Mendota obtained its Indian name, Wonkshokhomikla, "where the Indian lies."

There is another version of this story in which the "animal" discovered in a hollow tree was a catfish instead of a raccoon. (Winnebago)

THE BATTLE AT DEVILS LAKE

(Winnabago Legend)

A quarrel once arose between the water spirits, or under-water panthers, who had a den in the depths of Devils Lake, and the Thunderbirds. These animals were called Wakhakeera, and the Thunderers were called Wakunja. The great birds, flying high above the lake's surface, hurled their eggs (arrows or thunderbolts) into the waters and on the bluffs. The water monsters threw up great rocks and water-spouts from the bottom of the lake.

This terrible fight continued for days. The falling eggs tore down the trees and split off great pieces of rock, and the tumbled-down and cracked rocky surface of the surrounding bluffs stands as evidence of this great struggle.

The Thunderers were finally victorious and flew away to their homes and nests in the North. No Indian dared to approach the lake for a long time. The water spirits were not all killed and some are in Devils Lake to this day.

It was a custom of the early Indians to make tobacco offerings to the spirits of this lake, depositing tobacco on boulders on the shore or strewing it on

the surface of the water.

The Winnobago (Hochungara) name for this lake was Tawacunchukdah, sacred lake. There are a number of Winnobago myths and legends concerning Devils Lake.

One of the Winnobago tales, told very long ago, is a great creation song by the waters of this spirit lake. The waters churned and boiled, then a dark object appeared in the middle. It was a very long time before it came to the surface. Then it came up. The waters had become quiet. It had horns, a tail, a hairy hide, and four legs. It was a buffalo. It shook itself, it walked about, and it ate grass and leaves. It bellowed, and it was the father of the buffalo since then.

The buffalo skin was a particular favorite of making an Indian garment and an intermeditation between the white and the tribe. This skin and the other skins were very precious, serving as a cloak in various ways and on various occasions.

THE BIRTH OF THE BUFFALO CLAN

(Winnobago Myth)

Devils Lake was the place of birth of the Buffalo clan of the Winnobago tribe. Once very long ago a great commotion came to the waters of this spirit lake. The waters churned and boiled, then a dark object appeared in its middle. It was a very long time before it came to the surface. Then it swam ashore. The waters now became quiet. It had horns, a tail, a hairy hide, and four legs-it was a buffalo. It shook itself, it walked about, and it ate grass and leaves. It became a man; it was the father of the Buffalo clan, Teega.

The Buffalo clansmen had a particular function of acting as public orators and as intermediaries between the chief and the tribe. This clan and the Water-spirit clan were brother clans, serving each other in various ways and on various occasions.

THE SIOUX WAR PARTY

(Green Lake Legend)

"A long time ago,--Oh, more than a thousand years ago, a war party of Sioux Indians came up the Wisconsin River from Iowa in canoes. They carried their canoes overland from Puckaway Lake to Green Lake and camped overnight at the Sugar Loaf. There were many Sioux in this war party, and they decided to attack the village of their enemies, the Winnebago, on the opposite shore. In this village the men were away on a hunt. Only the old men, boys, and the women were at home. The Sioux hoped to obtain many scalps, prisoners, and much plunder by attacking the Winnebago town.

"In the morning, in full war paint, they embarked in their canoes and singing their war songs, paddled toward the south shore. When near the middle of the lake their canoes commenced to go round and round, and then they went down.

"The water spirits, who had a den in the bottom of this lake, were good friends of the Winnebago who had made tobacco and other offerings to them. They did not wish to see them slaughtered. They caused the great whirlpool which overturned and sucked down the Sioux

canoes filled with bloodthirsty warriors.

"After that the Winnobago people found dead Indians and smashed canoes and stone axes, flint arrows and copper knives all along the shores of the lake. I tell you, Mister, Green Lake is a bad lake." (Winnobago)

THE WISCONSIN RIVER

(Chippewa Legend)

WINNEBAGO

"The bed of the Wisconsin River was formed by an immense serpent. He was a manitou and had his home in the great forests near the Big Lake. His powers were very great, and all of the other animals were afraid of him.

"Once this great serpent started to travel from his home in the northern forests toward the sea. In crawling over the land his great body wore a deep groove, or channel, through the forests and prairies. Into this bed the water flowed. When he moved his tail great masses of water splashed from the channel through the forests and formed lakes. Many lakes and ponds were made in this way. All animal life fled before him as he traveled. Other less powerful serpents made haste to get out of his course, and they fled in all directions before him. Thus came the beds of the smaller streams which now pour their waters into Wisconsin. In places where the water pours over falls there were rocks in the path of the great serpent, so he crawled down over them. The water below is deep. It now rushes over the rocks, making the same loud noise which he made.

"Near the Wisconsin Dells he encountered a great

(Mississippi River legend)

body of rock. Finding a crack in this, he thrust his head into it and rent the stone wall by the contortions of his powerful body. The queer shapes of these rocks are due to his struggle to get through them. Where the banks of the river are very wide he rested. Below the Dells he changed his course of travel to the west, finally reaching the Mississippi River.

"The Winnobago name for the Dells was Meohahkeconahorah, "where the rocks strike together."

MAIDEN ROCK

(Mississippi River Legend)

Wenona was the beautiful daughter of Red Wing, a Dakota chief, whose village was on the banks of the Mississippi River. Many braves of the Dakota tribe came to woo this fair maiden. But Wenona had given her heart to a young Chippewa chief, White Eagle, whom she had met on the top of the great towering Mississippi River bluffs.

Her aged father would not listen to her pleadings for permission to wed this young lover. He was a member of an alien tribe whom the Dakota hated fiercely and with whom they were almost constantly at war. Red Wing said that he would rather kill his daughter than have her become the wife of a brave of the Chippewa nation. He promised to have his warriors track down and kill the Chippewa lover. He had selected for her husband Chief Kowaunee, an old man of the Dakota tribe.

While White Eagle waited for Wenona on the top of the high bluff her father was arousing his warriors to hunt down the hated Chippewa. Wenona fled to warn him of his danger. White Eagle was overjoyed to see his loved one. She told him that she had pleaded with her father to be allowed to become his wife and had failed and that he was sending his warriors to kill him. Her father had betrothed her to Old Chief Kowaunee.

As White Eagle was entreating her to flee with him to his own people, the Dakota warriors had ascended the bluff and were surrounding the lovers. A deadly arrow shot by one of the Dakota warriors pierced the heart of White Eagle, and he fell at Wenona's feet. Gathering his body in her arms she held him while his life blood gushed away. Then Wenona went to the edge of the bluff, and before anyone could stop her she cast herself from its edge down to the rocks below. She preferred to go to the spirit world with her lover rather than share the wigwam of Kewaunee.

Her father, who really loved her, recovered her crushed body from the rocks. He mourned her loss until the end of his life. In remembrance of Wenona's sacrifice a bluff and a village on the Upper Mississippi today bear the name of Maiden Rock.

THUNDER MOUNTAIN

(Potawatomi Legend)

"Now regarding the Thunder Mountain in the western part of Marinette County: I've heard something about it since I was a little tot. But I have never been there to see it, as close by as it is to where I live.

"First, let me try and explain Thunder. We believe it to be a large bird like an Eagle, only much larger. And when this bird was created it was made to have power in order to defend us from the great serpents, who wanted to kill and eat the human race. It was also to moisten the earth for vegetation. Thunderers, we call these great birds. One of them is called Chequah. And the mountain we call Bikwaki, so Thunder Mountain is Chequah Bikwaki.

"Many, many years have gone by since the Hill received its name. Because in the beginning of its Indian history the Thunder Birds used to make their nests here and sit on their two eggs until their young were hatched. Some Indians many years ago in the summer time visited the Hill and were surprised to find several pairs of young Thunders. It was always the custom with Indians to offer tobacco for friendship and safety.

"And later on in another visit by the Indians a

pond was discovered on the top of the Hill. And it was dangerous. The Serpent who lives under the Hill had caused this pond to be so that he could sun himself when the sky was clear. And on a sunny clear day he was sunning, probably asleep, when a lone Thunder discovered him and decided to catch him alive and carry him off. So the Thunder came down from the sky and caught the serpent. The Thunder would carry him high. The Serpent, struggling, would carry the Thunder back down on the pond.

"At that time an Indian hunter who was passing happened to look to the top of the Hill and to his surprise saw the two struggling, and went up to witness the great fight. He was noticed by them, and the Thunder Bird spoke and said, 'My friend, help me, and shoot the Serpent with your arrow, and I will make you a great man!' The Serpent also spoke and said, 'Help me, and shoot the Thunder, and I'll promise you my friendship to the end of all time! The Indian did not know which one to help, so he shut his eyes and shot an arrow toward the fighters and shot the Thunder. That shot weakened the Thunder and he fell down and was taken under the Hill as a prisoner. The Thunder Bird is still there, and the Hill is called

Chequah Bikwaki. Whenever there is going to be a thunder storm lightning is seen flashing from the Thunder Mountain."

THE WINDOW OF WAUCHESAH

(Thunder Mountain Legend)

Little Hill, or Little Mountain, is a high mountain of solid rock on the Peshtigo River. Its Menomini Indian name is Wau-che-sah. Surrounding it is a region of small forest openings and barren plains. The Thunderers, coming from their homes in the west, set fire to these plains by the flashes of lightning which issued from their eyes, and they keep the region burned over as they desire it to be.

At the beginning of this hill and ledge there is a small lake, a deep fountain of clear cold water. This lake the Indians believe to be a window of the mountain. In the lake there is the den of a great White Bear, the king of all bears. Through this window the bear observes what is going on in the world and keeps an eye on his enemies, the Thunderers. (Menominee)

THE BATTLE OF THE PIERCED FOREHEAD
(Menomonee River Legend)

It is known that a battle was fought on the present site of Marinette and Menomonee and that it was a sanguinary struggle. Mr. Louis Bernard, a Menominee Indian, residing in Menominee, whose forefathers were involved, tells this story of the fight.

"It was springtime. All nature was waking from the long winter's sleep; the grass was green, trees were budding and the birds were nesting. In the forest the young deer followed close to its mother and the black bear cub romped about the mouth of the winter den. In the water the fish were running upstream to spawn. And with the first return of the fish came the great sturgeon, the prize food fish of the Indian.

"They were speared, netted, and trapped until each band had an abundance for immediate use as well as fish to dry. But this year a band of Indians, living

on the banks of the Menominee, had built a stone dam across the river. It had been well constructed and the sturgeon were stopped so that none got past it up the stream. Under the direction of the chief, who had planned the dam, his band reaped a rich harvest.

"While this arrangement was very satisfactory to his people, to the other bands farther up the river it was very annoying. They waited patiently, thinking that when the lower group had secured enough fish for their own use, they would demolish the dam. Days passed and still no sturgeon came up-stream. The run would soon be over and unless the dam was torn down there would be no sturgeon for those in the upper villages.

"It so happened that the Indian band located next above the dam builders had for its chief a brother of the chief of the lower tribe, for all were Menomini. As time passed, this man considered that for the welfare of those in his band he must take some means to secure sturgeon. He called to him his son, aged twelve years, and instructed him:

"My brother, your uncle, is chief of the band below us. You shall go to him and give him my message. Say to him that I, his brother, send my greetings and would tell

him that in my camp there is much hunger. For the meat of the last season's hunt is now gone and as yet we have made no catch of the great sturgeon. Tell him that I, his brother, ask him as a favor, because his band is fat and sleek and has caught and put by many sturgeon, I ask him again to open the dam and let some of the great fish swim by. This I bid you tell him.

"The lad started on his trip. It was not hazardous, nor had he much to fear. Was he not going to his father's brother, his own uncle?

"When he came to the camp on the lower river, he spoke with boys of his own age and let it be known that he had a message for the chief. This information reached the ears of the chief and he summoned the youngster to appear before him.

"What would you with me?" he inquired, as he sat on his couch in his cabin. The boy stood before him and dared not speak until he was thus addressed. He was now free to deliver his message. This he did, speaking the words that his father had told him. When he was done he stood in silence waiting for whatever reply his uncle might wish to send back to his brother, the boy's father.

"The chief sat still for some moments, then as though suddenly resolved, he leaped up, crying, 'This is my answer' and grasped the loose skin of the boy's forehead in one hand, drawing it away from the skull. Then with the other hand he seized a flint knife and with one stroke skewered the weapon in the skin.

"'Thou shalt take this, my answer, to my brother, your father!' he cried.

"In shame the boy crept from the camp and started on the homeward trail. The pain of the wound was not great, but his anguish of spirit and shame at the insult was unbearable. Nor dared he remove the knife. It was a message and not for a boy of his age to tamper with. At the most he could but wipe away the blood which ran down into his eyes and mouth. But the knife remained.

"Though the distance between the two camps was not great, he could easily have reached his father's topee before dark, he lingered long on the way so that when he came to it it was long after sunset. Taking advantage of an opportunity, he crept under the edge of the lodge and lay down on his bed. As he lay among the skins there came to him his mother who inquired

if he were too tired from his journey to eat something. No, he was not hungry. She went away. Later she returned. Was he sick that he lay so close among the fur? No, he was not sick. All the time he kept his face hidden.

"Then came his father, and shortly the whole miserable story came out. At the sight of the knife in the skin of his son's forehead the rage of the chief was great. Nothing could wipe out this insult save the blood of his brother and all of the members of his brother's band.

"At once runners were dispatched to other bands farther up the stream, asking for their aid in an attack upon the dam builders. And the asking was not in vain. Shortly a great number of Indians gathered and moved down the river toward the camp of the chief who had offered the insult.

"They did not hurry. The attack was well-planned. By canoe they came down as far as what is now the Old Boom House, and here they disembarked under cover of darkness, for they journeyed at night. Then they stole up the hill where are now the golf grounds. Here they planned an ambushade, with the first coming of light they set upon the other band and in a long hard fight killed every member of the village and avenged the insult of the Pierced Forehead."

PINE LAKE

(Forest County Legend)

In Pine Lake, near Hiles, there is a line of submerged rocks. The story of these rocks is that when pursued by an enemy, probably the dreaded Sioux, the Indians of this region would come to the bank of the lake and cross on the hidden stones.

Being beneath the surface, the enemy could not see them. Reaching the lake shore, the attackers were dumb-founded to be unable to find any trace of their intended victims. It was as if the water, the air, the wood, or helpful spirits had swallowed them up or borne them safely away. For them a veil of mystery surrounded this lake.

(Potawatomi)

NANEBOZO AND THE BEAR

(Legend of Crawling Stone Lake)

Nanebozo was walking in the woods near this well-known lake when he was chased by a big black bear. He had once angered this bear by whacking him over the nose with a stick when he sat asleep under a big tree. The bear remembered the injury and was determined to have his revenge when he again met Nanebozo. His opportunity to do so had come. As Nanebozo ran toward the water, his only avenue of escape from the angry bear, he gathered up an armful of stones. As he stepped into the water he dropped or throw them before him, one after the other, using them as stepping stones. Over these stones the baffled bear dared not follow Nanebozo, who thus safely crossed to the other shore and escaped his pursuer. Here he "made a nose" at the bear.

Some of these stones still remain in position in Crawling Stone Lake in Vilas County and mark the flight long ago of the Indian culture hero, Nanebozo. (Chippewa)

OLD LADY'S LAKE

Smith Lake, a short distance north of Hayward, the old people among the Chippewa Indians know as "Old Lady Lake." The story of how the lake obtained this name is as follows. Some Chippewa, who were traveling northward over a trail from the present locality of Hayward, had in their party a very old Indian woman. She was very infirm, and there appeared to be no doubt that she would be unable to stand the hardships of trail travel, so when they reached the shores of Smith Lake they made her as comfortable as possible and left her to die. No one ever knew what became of her. For many years after that Indians traveling over the trail saw, or thought they saw, the spirit of the old lady when they passed the shores of this lake. This spirit harmed no one, but the Indians were never desirous of lingering long in the vicinity. (Chippewa)

THE THUNDERBIRD AT THE POST

(Chippewa Legend)

"The Indians believe that thunder is the voice of an immense invisible bird that comes at times to warn them that the Great Spirit is displeased with something they have done, and that it always comes when the country is already storm-vexed, as the time is then opportune for this mighty bird to add its voice to the naturally saddened feelings of the people, and thereby making its presence more effective. The lightning they believed to be flashes from the eyes of this enormous bird, and when the storm is fierce and the flashes are vivid it is taken as a warning that their bad deeds are many and that their retribution must be great. When one is killed by the fluid they believe it is a judgment sent by the Great Spirit through the agency of this mysterious bird.

"They call this bird Chenemoko. When they see distant flashes of lightning and do not hear the voice, as they believe it to be, of this great bird, they know it is at a distance, but they still believe that it is teaching a lesson to a distant people and will soon be with them. But should a storm pass by

without the voice and the flashes coming near them, they are happy again, for they feel relieved, believing that the bird is not angry with them. They firmly believe this bird to be an agency of the Almighty, which is kept moving about to keep an eye on the wrong-doings of the people. When a tree is stricken and set on fire, the lesson which it wishes to impart has been given, and the rain is sent to prevent the fire from destroying the country.

"There is a point of land in this part of the country that the Indians call Pa-qua-a-wong, meaning a forest destroyed by the great Thunderbird. I have visited this place. It is now almost barren; the timber which was once upon it, having been destroyed by lightning. The Indians believed that the storm bird had ruined this forest to show its wrath, and that the people might profit by the lesson. A hunting party of Indians was once caught on this barren land in a thunderstorm, and took refuge under the trunk of a fallen tree which had been sufficiently burnt on its under side to give them shelter. One of the party, in his hurry to get out of the rain, left his gun standing against the log. The lightning struck it,

running down the barrel and twisting it into odd shapes and destroying it; and the owner of this gun was thereafter pointed out by the whole band as the person upon whom the storm bird desired to bestow its frowns."

MARBLE POINT

On Marble Point on the shore of Lake Superior there is much game, but the old men will never go there except to get special charms for the Midewewin ceremony. Here are supposed to live the "Little People" of Marble Point, who are much respected and of whose power there are many tales. The stones found here are all very round, supposedly made so through the work of these Indian fairy folk, and the atmosphere of the whole region is one of sacredness. One may not cut a tree or kill an animal without incurring the displeasure of the "Little People" and perhaps receiving swift punishment. (Chippewa)

WINNEBOUJOU

(Brule River Myth)

Winnoboujou, the giant blacksmith, sometimes spoken of as Hiawatha, was an all-powerful manitou. His forge was near the Eau Claire Lakes in northwestern Wisconsin. He used the highest flat-topped granite peak for his anvil. The region where he worked in the southwestern part of Bayfield County is that of the Smoky Mountains, a wild and rugged country.

There he shaped the miswabik, or native copper of the Brule River region, into various useful weapons and implements for his children, the Chippewa Indians. He was especially adept in shaping copper spearpoints and fishhooks required for the catching of the giant sonesuggogo, or speckled trout. This fish abounded in the clear spring waters of the Lake Superior section of the Brule.

Much of Winnoboujou's forging was done by moonlight, and the ringing blows of his powabik (iron) hammer were heard by the Indians as far down the Lake Superior waters as at the Sault Rapids. These booming noises still echo down the length of the Brule Valley and the waters of the St. Croix River.

On clear moonlight nights these ringing blows are plainly heard. The glow of his forge fire lights

up the entire sky.

The sound of the giant smith's hammer was considered a blessing or lucky portent by the Chippewa and was dreaded by their ancient enemies, the Dakota or Sioux. An Indian, hearing the noise of Winnoboujou's smithing, became possessed of strength and industry.

Winnoboujou's summer home was on the Brule River near its source. It was necessary for him to keep an eye always on Ahnik, the Beaver, a rival manitou who might, if not watched, slip across the onegun (portage) to the St. Croix River and then, by way of the Mississippi, reach the gulf. (Chippewa)

THE APOSTLE ISLANDS

(Chippewa Legend)

Winnoboujou was hunting in the Brule River country. He had for weapons his powerful bow and a quiver filled with arrows slung over his back. In the big woods of the Brule he saw the fresh tracks of a deer which he followed. It was a large animal, and Winnoboujou, looking over the tree tops, could trace its movements as the deer ran. The forest was so dense that only now and then could he catch a glimpse of it. Then he shot an arrow to the spot, but the tree trunks and foliage always prevented his striking the fleet animal.

Winnoboujou followed the deer all the day and shot away all of the arrows he had in his quiver. So he throw away his bow. When the hunted deer reached the shore of Lake Superior it ran into the water and swam away. When Winnoboujou reached the shore the deer was already far out in the water. He became so angry at his failure to get the deer that he grabbed up handfuls of rocks and threw them in the direction which the deer had taken. These, falling into the water, became the Apostle Islands, lying where we see them today.

(Chippewa)

MANITOU MENIS
(Spirit Island Legend)

Spirit Island, in the upper St. Louis River near Superior and Duluth, gets its name from the story of an Indian romance.

A beautiful Chippewa maiden and a strapping young Sioux, daughter and son of two rival chiefs, were desperately in love with each other.

This head of the Lake Superior country was for many years the neutral hunting and fishing grounds of the Sioux and the Chippewa nations. It was also the scene of many a battle between warring bands. It is said that over a thousand invading Sioux were captured or killed in the last decisive battle on the St. Louis River.

The young Chippewa maiden rescued her Sioux lover during this battle, and they both fled in a birch bark canoe to this Spirit Island. After counting his Sioux scalps, her irate father-chieftain pursued them in the early morning but found only their canoe and smoldering camp fire. Both brave and maiden had completely and absolutely disappeared, leaving only two pairs of moccasins side-by-side at the foot of a couch of cedar boughs.

The redman's logical solution was that "Nesagia Manitou," or Love Spirit, had taken them away in his "gogie Jemou," or sky canoe, to a hunting ground of never-ending happiness and peace.

Ever afterward their weird Indian love songs could be heard at night by anyone who ventured on the island. No Indian would camp there, as they held the place sacred and regarded it with awe. Many Indians will never land or camp on it even now. A comparatively few years ago a small flock of angora goats were put on the island to summer there, but all swam ashore to the mainland and were so wild and timid that it was a long time before they could be caught and tamed again.

At this writing it is still unoccupied, though a beautiful wooded island within a "few canoe lengths" of the thriving cities of Superior and Duluth. (Chippewa)

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