


POTAWATOMI HISTORY ©

(revised Friday, December 18, 1998 - 11:01)

[Note: This is a single part of what will be, by my classification, about 240 compact tribal histories (contact to 1900). It is limited to the lower 48 states of the U.S. but also includes those First Nations from Canada and Mexico that had important roles ([Huron](#), Assiniboine, etc.).

This history's content and style are representative. The normal process at this point is to circulate an almost finished product among a peer group for comment and criticism. At the end of this History you will find links to those Nations referred to in the History of the Potawatomi.

Using the Internet, this can be more inclusive. Feel free to comment or suggest corrections via e-mail. Working together we can end some of the historical misinformation about Native Americans. You will find the ego at this end to be of standard size. Thanks for stopping by. [I look forward to your comments...](#) Lee Sultzman.



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Potawatomi Location

In 1600 the Potawatomi lived in the northern third of lower Michigan. Threatened by the Ontario tribes trading with the French (Neutrals, Tionontati, Ottawa, and [Huron](#)) during the late 1630s, the Potawatomi began leaving their homeland in 1641 and moved to the west side of Lake Michigan in northern Wisconsin. This was completed during the 1650s after the Iroquois defeated the French allies and swept into lower Michigan. By 1665 all of the Potawatomi were living on Wisconsin's Door Peninsula just east of Green Bay. They remained there until 1687 when the French and Great Lakes Algonquin began driving the Iroquois back to New York. As the [Iroquois](#) retreated, the Potawatomi moved south along the west shore of Lake Michigan reaching the south end by 1695. At about the same time, one band settled near Jesuit mission on the St. Joseph River in southwest Michigan. Shortly after the French built Fort Ponchartrain at Detroit in 1701, groups of Potawatomi settled nearby. By 1716 most Potawatomi villages were located in a area between Milwaukee to Detroit. During the 1760s they expanded into northern Indiana and central Illinois.

Land cessions to the Americans began in 1807 and during the next 25 years drastically reduced their territory. Removal west of the Mississippi occurred between 1834 and 1842. The Potawatomi were removed in two groups: the Prairie and Forest Bands from northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin went to Council Bluffs in southwest Iowa; and the Potawatomi of the Woods (Michigan and Indian bands) were relocated to eastern Kansas near Osawatomie. In 1846 the two groups merged and were placed on a single reservation north of Topeka. Arguments over allotment and citizenship led to their separation in 1867. The Citizen Potawatomi left for Oklahoma and settled near present-day Shawnee. Most of their lands were lost to allotment in 1889. The Prairie Potawatomi stayed in Kansas and still have a reservation. Several Potawatomi groups avoided removal and remained in the Great Lakes. Three

are in Michigan: the Huron Potawatomi in the south-central; the Pokagon Potawatomi in southwest and northern Indiana, and the Hannaville Potawatomi of upper peninsula. The Forest County Potawatomi live in northeast Wisconsin, and the Canadian Potawatomi in southern Ontario have become part of the Walpole Island and the Stoney Point and Kettle Point First Nations.

Population

Estimates of the original Potawatomi population range as high as 15,000, but 8,000 is probably closer to the truth. Although they had undergone 30 years of war, relocation, and epidemic, the French estimated there were about 4,000 in 1667. Since all Potawatomi bands had gathered into four villages near Green Bay at that time, this probably was fairly accurate. Later estimates vary between 1,200 to 3,400, but the Potawatomi had separated into many bands, and these estimates failed to list all of them. Accurate counts were not possible until the Potawatomi had been moved to Kansas. In 1854 the Indian Bureau listed 3,440 on the reservation, but some had left with the [Kickapoo](#) for northern Mexico. The report also mentioned 600 "strolling Potawatomi," who had avoided removal and were somewhere in Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin. It also failed to include the 4-600 Potawatomi in Canada. The 1910 census listed 2,440 Potawatomi in the United States, with another 180 in Canada - total of 2,620. The current population of all Potawatomi in Canada and the United States is almost 28,000.

Names

The Potawatomi name is a translation of the Ojibwe "potawatomink" meaning "people of the place of fire." Similar renderings of this are: Fire Nation, Keepers of the Sacred Fire, and People of the Fireplace - all of which refer to the role of the Potawatomi as the keeper of the council fire in an earlier alliance with the [Ojibwe](#) and Ottawa. In their own language, the Potawatomi refer to themselves as the Nishnabek or "people" (similar to the Ojibwe name for themselves, Anishinabe (Anishinaubag, Neshnabek). A lengthy name like Potawatomi has had a variety of spellings: Pattawatima, Putawatimes, Pouteouatims, and Poutouatami. Also called: Adawadeny or Atowateany (Iroquois), Assistaeronon (Huron), Kunuhayanu (Caddo), Ouapou, Pekineni ([Fox](#)), Pous, Poux, or Pu (French), Tcashtalalgi (Creek), Undatomatendi (Huron), Wahhonahah ([Miami](#)), Wahiucaxa (Omaha), Wahiuyaha (Kansa), and Woraxa (Iowa, Missouri, Otoe, and Winnebago).

Language

Central Algonquin - very close to Ojibwe and Ottawa.

Sub-Nations

During the 1700s there were three groups of Potawatomi based on location:

1. [Detroit Potawatomi](#) - southeast Michigan
2. [Prairie Potawatomi](#) - northern Illinois
3. [St. Joseph Potawatomi](#) - southwest Michigan

By 1800 the names and locations of these three divisions had changed to:

1. [Potawatomi of the Woods](#) - southern Michigan and northern Indiana
2. [Forest Potawatomi](#) - northern Wisconsin and upper Michigan
3. [Potawatomi of the Prairie](#) - northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin

Villages

[Illinois Villages](#):

Assiminehkon (Paw-Paw Grove), Calumet, Chicago, Little Rock, Mesheketeno, Minemaung, Mosheketeno, Nayonsay, Rock Village, Sandy Creek, Sawmehnaug, Secawgo, Shaytee (Grand Bois), Shobonier (Shabbona), Soldier's Village, and Waisuskuck.

Indiana Villages:

Abercronk, Ashkum, Aubbeenaubbee, Checkawkose, Chekase, Chichipe Outipe, Chippoy (Chipaille), Comoza, Elkhart (Miami), Kethtippecagnunk (Wea), Kinkash, Macon, Massac, Mamotway, Maukekose, Menominee, Menoquet, Mesquawbuck, Metea, Moran, Mota, Muskwawasepeotan, Pierrish, Rum, Tassinong, Tippecanoe, Toisa, Wanatah, Wimego, Winamac, and Wonongoseak.

Michigan Villages:

Bawbee's Village, Big Wolf, Cheenaug, James Burnett, Koassun, Le Clerc, Macousin, Mangachqua, Mary Ann, Matchebenashshewish, Matchkee, Menoquet, Mickkesawbee, Moccasin, New Village, Nottawaseppi (Natowapsepe), Pokagon, Prairie Ronde, Saint Joseph, Seginsavin, Tondagaie, Tonguish, Topenebee, and Wolf Rapids.

Wisconsin Villages:

Big Foot (Gros Pied, Maumksuck), Manitowoc, Maquanago, Mechingan, Milwaukee (Ojibwe, Ottawa), Mitchigami, Mukwonago, Oconomowoc, Rock County, St. Michael, Skunk Grove, Waubekeetschuk, and Waukesha.

At present, there are seven separate groups of Potawatomi - six in the United States and one in Canada:

1. **Canada** - When removal to Kansas and Iowa began in the 1830s, some Potawatomi escaped by moving to Canada. Those from Indiana and lower Michigan slipped into southern Ontario, where they settled among the Ojibwe and Ottawa at Walpole Island, Stoney Point, Kettle Point, Caradoc, and Riviere aux Sables. At the same time, other groups of Potawatomi west of Lake Michigan crossed near Sault Ste. Marie to the Ojibwe and Ottawa communities on Cockburn and Manitoulin Islands. After the "heat was off," some of the northern groups returned to the United States and became the Hannaville Potawatomi. Although Canada listed 290 Potawatomi in Ontario in 1890, the Canadian Potawatomi over the years have intermarried with the Ojibwe and Ottawa blurring tribal identity. At present, more than 2,000 Native Americans in Canada can claim Potawatomi descent.
2. **Citizen Potawatomi** - Federally recognized, the Citizen Potawatomi are the largest Potawatomi group. Most are descended from the Potawatomi of the Woods (southern Michigan and northern Indiana) including the Mission Band from St. Joseph in southwest Michigan. Acculturated and mostly Christian, it was easier for them to accept allotment and citizenship in 1861 than the more traditional Prairie Potawatomi. This led to a separation (not on the best of terms) in 1870 when the Citizens moved to Oklahoma. Allotment took most of their land in 1889, and they have kept only 4,371 acres, less than two acres of which is tribally owned! Most Citizen Potawatomi have remained in Oklahoma - the Indian Bureau listing 1,768 of them in 1908 - but during the dust bowl of the 1930s, many left for California. Headquartered in Shawnee, they are organized under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act with a current enrollment of more than 18,000.
3. **Forest County Potawatomi** - Probably the most traditional group, the Forest County Potawatomi of northern Wisconsin have retained much of their original language, religion, and culture. They are descended from three Potawatomi bands from Lake Geneva in southern Wisconsin who avoided removal by moving north to the Black River and Wisconsin Rapids. In 1867 they were joined by Potawatomi who had left Kansas. In 1913 the government accepted their residence in Wisconsin and purchased 12,000 acres for them. Since the original intention was to distribute this

in individual allotments, the parcels were scattered, but resistance to individual ownership delayed this until they had re-organized under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. All land, except for 200 acres, is tribally owned. Federally recognized with an enrollment close to 800, they live in three separate communities with the tribal headquarters in Crandon, Wisconsin.

4. [Hannville Potawatomi](#) - The Hannville Potawatomi at Wilson in upper Michigan share a similar history with their Forest County counterparts. Originally from Illinois and Wisconsin, they refused to leave after 1834 and moved to northern Wisconsin. For a time, some lived with the Menominee while others stayed with the Ojibwe and Ottawa in Canada. Some returned to the United States in 1853 but were landless. Peter Marksnian, an Ojibwe missionary, found some land for them in 1883, and Hannville was named after his wife. Congress in 1913 acknowledged the Hannville Potawatomi and purchased 3,400 acres of scattered parcels - 39 acres were added in 1942. Federally recognized since 1936, membership is almost 900.
5. [Huron Potawatomi \(Nottawaseppi\)](#) - Originally a part of the Detroit Tribes in southeastern Michigan, the Huron Potawatomi did not entirely escape removal. Gathered by soldiers and sent to Kansas in 1840, the bands of Mogwago and Pamptopee escaped and returned to Michigan. The government relented in 1845 when President Polk signed a bill giving 40 acres of public lands in southeast Michigan to the Huron Potawatomi. Another 80 acres was added to this in 1848, with a Methodist mission established the following year. Most Huron Potawatomi became citizens and took their lands in severalty during 1888, and federal tribal status was officially terminated during 1902. However, the Nottawaseppi continued their tribal organization and traditions, and with an enrollment of approximately 600, they were successful in regaining their federal recognition late in 1995.
6. [Pokagon Potawatomi](#) - Roman Catholic and acculturated because of the St. Joseph mission, the Pokagon were protected from removal by treaty and were allowed to stay in southwest Michigan. Their name derives from Chief Simon Pokagon, a famous Native American lecturer during the 1850s. Refused tribal status under the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), their long struggle to gain federal recognition finally succeeded in 1994. With tribal offices located in Dowagiac, Michigan, the Pokagon are in the process of reacquiring a land base. Currently, most of their 2,600 members are scattered among the general populations of southern Michigan and northern Indiana.
7. [Prairie Potawatomi](#) - Formed from the Forest and Prairie Potawatomi bands west of Lake Michigan, they were removed to southwest Iowa in 1834. They were accompanied by Ottawa and Ojibwe from the same area who merged with them. Placed on a Kansas reservation in 1846 with the Potawatomi of the Woods and Mission Band, the Prairie Potawatomi preferred to hold their land in common and remained in Kansas when the Citizens left for Oklahoma in 1870. They were eventually forced to accept allotment which reduced their land from 77,400 acres to the current 20,325 - 560 tribally owned. Population in 1908 was only 676, but since then, it has grown to almost 4,000 with the tribal headquarters in Mayetta, Kansas. The Prairie Potawatomi are usually traditional, and many practice either the Drum Religion or belong to the Native American Church.

Culture

The Potawatomi originally provided for themselves as hunter/gatherers because they were too far north for reliable agriculture. Like the closely-related Ojibwe and Ottawa, their diet came from wild game, fish, wild rice, red oak acorns, and maple syrup, but the Potawatomi were adaptive. After being forced by the Beaver Wars (1630-1700) to relocate to Wisconsin, they learned farming from the Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, and [Winnebago](#). When the French arrived at Green Bay, Potawatomi women were tending large fields of corn, beans, and squash. They even took their agriculture a step further and in time were known for their medicinal herb gardens. Agriculture was an extension of the women's role as gathers, but other than clearing the fields, the men remained hunters and warriors.

By 1660 the Potawatomi were agricultural, and their movement south after 1680 was most likely motivated by a desire for better soil and a longer growing season. Other things changed as European contact continued. Besides the switch to metal tools and firearms, the Potawatomi by the 1760s were abandoning birchbark canoes for horses "borrowed" from white settlers. This served well for buffalo hunts, first on the prairies of northern Indiana and Illinois, and later the Great Plains. [One other skill they adopted was standard infantry tactics from their wars with the Americans, and during their fights in Kansas during the 1850s, the Pawnee experienced the devastating effect of continuous fire as Potawatomi warriors maintained a steady advance in two alternating ranks, the first kneeling and firing while the other stood to the rear and reloaded.](#)

Early French accounts describe the Potawatomi as a little shorter, but more robust and darker skinned than other Algonquin. Otherwise, Potawatomi were a typical Great Lakes tribe. Summer villages were fairly large with rectangular, bark-covered (or woven brush) houses. After their buffalo hunt in the fall, they separated into small hunting camps of extended families. Winter homes were oval, dome-shaped wigwams resembling those of the Ojibwe. In later periods, most Potawatomi preferred log cabins much like their white neighbors. While some polygamy occurred with men marrying two or more sisters, the Potawatomi were generally more strict about chastity than other tribes. Kinship was determined by patrilineal descent, although marriage was matrilineal (husband moved in with his wife's family). [Warriors wore their hair long except in times of war when they shaved their heads except for a scalplock to which they added an upright roach of porcupine hair with an eagle feather. War paint was red and black.](#) Women's hair was parted in the middle with a single long braid behind.

The Potawatomi followed the Ojibwe pattern of tribal identity with little central political organization. The independent bands were bound to each other by a common language and a shared clan system which cut across band lines. [This was later reinforced by the Midewiwin \(Grand Medicine Society\), a secret religious organization of both men and women, whose members performed elaborate healing ceremonies to deal with epidemics.](#) Although their political structure was not what Europeans expected, it functioned quite well, and Potawatomi bands rarely fought each other and could cooperate when the situation required. However, it created problems for the Americans in negotiations. Separate treaties were needed with each band, and before they were finished, the Potawatomi had signed forty-two separate documents with the United States.

History

In a tradition shared by all three tribes, the Potawatomi came from the northeast with the Ottawa and Ojibwe to the eastern shore of Lake Huron. This is believed to have happened sometime around 1400 after the North American climate became colder. The Ottawa remained near the French River and on Manitoulin and the other islands in Lake Huron, but the Potawatomi and Ojibwe continued north along the shoreline until they reached Sault St. Marie. About 1500, the Potawatomi crossed over and settled in the northern third of lower Michigan. Although separated, the three related tribes remembered their earlier alliance and referred to each other as the "three brothers." As the keepers of the council fire of this old alliance, the Potawatomi were called "potawatomink" or "people of the place of fire."

Although they did not meet until later, the French first learned of the Potawatomi on far side of the "Great Freshwater Sea" when the Huron mentioned them to Champlain in 1615 during his first visit to their villages. There is a chance Jean Nicollet may have met the Potawatomi in 1634 while enroute to Green Bay to arrange a truce between the Winnebago and the Ottawa and Huron. However, Nicollet followed the north shore of Lake Michigan, so it is probable he missed them. In any case, his list of the tribes living on Lake Michigan (many of whom he never met) became the basis for first mention of the Potawatomi in the Jesuit Relations of 1640. French contact occurred the following year during the visit of Jesuits Charles Raymbault and Issac Jogues to the Ojibwe at Sault Ste. Marie. By this time, some of the Potawatomi had already moved to the west side of Lake Michigan. During the 1630s, the Huron, Ottawa, [Neutral](#), and [Tionontati](#) had exhausted the beaver in their homelands and were seizing new hunting territory from the tribes in lower Michigan.

Because the French at this time rarely ventured beyond the Huron villages, they only knew of this from the Huron who, borrowing the Ottawa name for the Potawatomi, referred to all Algonquin in lower Michigan (Potawatomi, [Mascouten](#), Fox, Sauk, and Kickapoo) as Assistaeronon (Fire Nation). Since there was no threat to the fur trade, the French did not try to intervene. The warfare in lower Michigan was a part of the Beaver Wars (1630-1700) which had started in the east between the French-allied [Algonkin](#) and [Montagnais](#) fighting the Dutch-allied Iroquois for the upper St. Lawrence River. This set off a chain reaction as tribes competed with each other for territory and fur. As the Iroquois gained the advantage, they were threatening to cut the trade route through the Ottawa Valley to the Great Lakes, and the French began selling firearms to the Huron, Ottawa, and Algonkin. The Dutch countered with their own sales to the Iroquois, and after British and Swedish entered the picture, it was an arms race. The French weapons found their way through trade to the Tionontati and Neutrals, who turned them against the Michigan tribes. With only traditional weapons, the Potawatomi and others resisted bravely, but at a tremendous disadvantage.

The Potawatomi which the Jesuits met at Sault Ste. Marie in 1641 had been among the first to leave. After crossing the lake, they had first attempted to settle near Green Bay, but the hostile reception received from the Winnebago forced them north to a refuge with the Ojibwe. During the next few years, other refugee tribes arrived in Wisconsin from lower Michigan, and the Winnebago, Menominee, and Illinois soon had more invaders than they could handle. Sometime between 1642 and 1652, the Winnebago became involved in a war with the Fox who had settled uninvited on the west side of Lake Winnebago. Enroute to attack a Fox village, 500 Winnebago warriors were caught on the lake in their canoes by a storm and drowned. The Winnebago drew themselves into a single large village which was perfect for the epidemic which struck next. Shortly afterwards, they were nearly exterminated in a war with the Illinois. Aside occasional skirmishes with the Dakota (Sioux) or Ojibwe (Chippewa), there was little resistance after fall of the Winnebago to the resettlement of other refugees in Wisconsin.

The French allies and trading partners started the depopulation of lower Michigan but never finished it. Iroquois victories in the east drove the Algonkin and Montagnais from the upper St. Lawrence and lower Ottawa Valleys and cut the trade route from the Great Lakes. To shorten the travel distance for the Huron and Ottawa, the French built a new post at Montreal in 1642, but with Iroquois war parties roaming the lower Ottawa River, only large canoe convoys could get through. As the flow of fur slowed to a trickle, the French in 1645 were forced to agree to a peace with the Mohawk and promised to remain neutral in future wars between the Iroquois and Huron. During the next two years, the Iroquois, who were running out of beaver in their own homeland, used every diplomatic means to gain Huron permission to hunt in their territory or to be allowed to pass through to hunt in the lands beyond. When their requests were denied, the Iroquois resorted to war. After two years of attacks on villages in the Huron homeland, 2,000 Iroquois warriors in March of 1649 launched a coordinated attack which overran and destroyed the Huron Confederacy.

Huron who survived the onslaught fled to neighboring tribes, only to have the Iroquois pursue them and destroy their allies. The Tionontati fell later that year followed by the Algonkin and Nipissing in 1650. The Neutral suffered a similar fate during 1651, and the Erie were defeated after a three-year war with the Iroquois which ended in 1656. At the same time, Iroquois war parties swept into lower Michigan and completed the expulsion of its original inhabitants. During the next forty years, lower Michigan was a "no man's land" between the Iroquois and their defeated enemies in Wisconsin and upper Michigan. Thousands of Iroquoian-speaking captives were adopted into the tribes of the Iroquois League swelling their ranks to over 25,000 but also creating a serious problem. So long as one group of their former enemies remained free, the Iroquois were in danger of an insurrection from within, and 1,000 Tionontati and Huron had escaped and fled north to the Ottawa villages at Mackinac. Iroquois warriors followed and tried to capture them in 1650. This failed, but certain of another attack, the Tionontati and Huron (who would merge to become the Wyandot), evacuated Mackinac and moved west to an island in Green Bay. But the Iroquois were relentless, and a Mohawk and Seneca war party attacked their new village in 1652.

Needing allies to survive, the Wyandot and Ottawa joined with the Potawatomi to build a large fortified village (Mitchigami). The Iroquois returned in 1653, but their first attack was repulsed, and during the long siege which followed, the Iroquois ran out of food and were forced to retreat. Unfortunately, they had also attacked the Nikikouek Ojibwe on the northern shore of Lake Huron, and the Mississauga Ojibwe killed almost half of them on their return to New York. Although they were making enemies in the process, the Iroquois kept coming back to Wisconsin after the Wyandot. There was another attack in 1655, and by 1658 the Wyandot had left Green Bay and moved inland to Lake Pepin on the Mississippi. The Ottawa also left for the south shore of Lake Superior at Chequamegon and Keweenaw Bay. However, their departures brought little relief for the Potawatomi and other refugees at Green Bay.

After the Iroquois had overrun the Huron in 1649, the French fur trade was in shambles. In danger of being overrun and destroyed (only 400 Frenchmen in North America at this time), the French welcomed an offer of peace from the western Iroquois (Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga) in 1653, and to protect this truce, the French stopped their travel to the Great Lakes. However, they kept inviting their former trading partners to bring furs to Montreal. With the Iroquois in control of the Ottawa River, this was an extremely dangerous undertaking requiring large canoe fleets and hundreds of heavily-armed warriors to force their way past the Iroquois blockade. But having become dependent on European trade goods, the Wyandot and Ottawa were willing to try. After collected furs from the Cree far to the north and the Wisconsin tribes, they used Ojibwe warriors to supplement their ranks and fought their way to and from Montreal. Unable to stop the convoys, the Iroquois went after their source, and their war parties moved into Wisconsin and upper Michigan attacking any tribe supplying fur to the Wyandot and Ottawa.

The renewed trade and raiding added to the misery in the region. More than 20,000 refugees had crowded into an area which was, for the most part, too far north for maize agriculture. This forced the farming tribes to rely on hunting to feed themselves which quickly used up the limited resources available. Hunting for fur only aggravated the problem. Harassed by Iroquois warriors, ravaged by epidemics, and stalked by starvation, the refugees fought among themselves or with the neighboring Dakota and Ojibwe over hunting territory. The Potawatomi were more fortunate, because their villages were located on the Door Peninsula jutting out into Lake Michigan to form the south side of Green Bay. With some of the best soil in the area, this was where the Winnebago had grown their corn for centuries. Blessed with an ample food supply, the Potawatomi found it easier to maintain their tribal unity while larger tribes separated into mixed villages.

Potawatomi villages were mixed but not as much, and this allowed them to become the dominant tribe in an area which also contained: Wyandot, Ottawa, Illinois, Miami, [Nipissing](#), Noquet, [Menominee](#), Winnebago, Mascouten, Fox, Sauk, Kickapoo, several varieties of Ojibwe, and even some Cheyenne, with occasional unfriendly visits from the Dakota, Iowa, and Iroquois. [In this tense atmosphere, warfare was constant between shifting alliances based more on locality than tribal affiliation. One example was the Sturgeon War which erupted sometime around 1658 between the Ojibwe and Menominee over fish weirs at the mouth of a river. After the Menominee refused to remove their weirs which prevented sturgeon from moving upstream, the Ojibwe destroyed their village.](#) The survivors fled to their relatives at Green Bay who asked the nearby villages (Green Bay tribes) to help them retaliate against the Ojibwe. Before it was over, the Potawatomi, Fox, Sauk, and Noquet had joined the fighting.

While chaos ruled in Wisconsin, the French peace with the Iroquois ended in 1658 after the murder of a Jesuit ambassador. War resumed along the St. Lawrence, but since there was no longer a peace to protect, Pierre-Espirit Radisson and Médart Chouart des Groseilliers saw an opportunity to ignore the travel ban and renew fur trade in the Great Lakes. Joining a party of Wyandot on their return journey, they reached the west end of Lake Superior and traded with the Dakota. They were arrested and had their furs confiscated when they got back to Quebec in 1660. But by 1664, the French had tired of living in fear of the Iroquois. Canada was placed under the king and a regiment of regular French soldiers was sent to Quebec to deal with the Iroquois. The ban on travel west was also lifted, and in 1665 the fur trader Nicolas Perrot, Jesuit Father Claude-Jean Allouez, and six other Frenchmen accompanied 400

Ottawa and Huron on their return to the Great Lakes. They reached Green Bay in September and spent the winter.

Allouez was interested in re-establishing contact with the Wyandot and Ottawa converts that the Jesuits had made before 1649, but he visited many other villages in the area and observed the Potawatomi were growing corn. Perrot, of course, was interested in more practical matters like fur. During 1665 the French soldiers in Quebec began attacks on the Iroquois homeland, and by 1667 the League had agreed to a peace which included French allies and trading partners. This brought a much-needed period of peace to Wisconsin and allowed the French to travel unmolested to Green Bay and beyond. However, as the dominant tribe in the area, the Potawatomi were not happy with the increased French presence. During the 1660s, some of them had accompanied the Ottawa to Montreal, and they had come home angered by the lack of respect and abuse they had received.

The Potawatomi were also accustomed to being middlemen in the collection of furs for the Ottawa and Wyandot to take to Montreal, and they viewed the French traders at Green Bay as competitors in this enterprise. In 1668 the Potawatomi attempted to bypass the French and trade directly at Montreal, but Perrot thwarted them by building a permanent trading post at La Baye (Green Bay). A Jesuit mission, St. Francis Xavier, was added the following year. As the number of French grew, the Potawatomi lost some of their former influence, and to help their fur trade, the French began mediating intertribal disputes to end the warfare endemic to the region. This also annoyed the Potawatomi who attempted to usurp the French by mediating a dispute between the Illinois and Miami. Despite these problems, the Potawatomi learned to tolerate the French who provided the firearms they were using against the Dakota. In 1671 the Potawatomi provided the guides which took Perrot south to the Miami villages near Chicago.

To keep the French supplied with fur, the Green Bay tribes were forced to hunt farther west, and this brought confrontations with the Dakota. To fight them, the Potawatomi after 1675 were with the Fox, Sauk, and Ottawa, but the Dakota were not easily intimidated and attacked a Potawatomi village near Green Bay in 1677. By this time, the Jesuits had made their first converts among the Potawatomi. [One of these was a young warrior from an important family who shortly afterwards was killed by a bear while hunting. In itself, this was not unusual, but the bear had been particularly enraged and ripped his corpse to pieces. The warrior's family felt that the mutilation and dismemberment had to be avenged, so the Potawatomi declared war on bears and, during the next few years, captured and tortured-to-death more than 500 bears.](#)

In 1680 Daniel DeLhut (Duluth) negotiated a truce between the Saulteur Ojibwe and Dakota which allowed French traders to visit the Dakota villages. Unfortunately, the agreement did not include the Keweenaw Ojibwa or the Green Bay tribes. They were still at war with the Dakota and did not want the French to arm their enemies. In 1682 Menominee and Ojibwe warriors of chief Achiganaga murdered two French traders in upper Michigan. DeLhut's attempt to punish Achiganaga and his warriors was frustrated when the Potawatomi and Ottawa let it be known there would be trouble if Achiganaga's punishment was too severe. DeLhut relented and executed only one Menominee, but unrest grew as the French continued to trade with the Dakota. Rumors spread among the Potawatomi that the Jesuits used witchcraft to cause epidemics, and in 1683 the [Sauk](#) murdered two Jesuit donné. The Potawatomi chief Onanghisse began to organize a conspiracy to force the French to leave Green Bay.

This might have gotten serious if other events had not intervened. The peace with the Iroquois had ended in 1680 with a series of devastating attacks against the Illinois which marked the beginning of the second phase of the Beaver Wars. It is a common mistake to view the French effort in the Great Lakes as unified, when competition between French traders was often as treacherous as any intertribal rivalry. When Robert La Salle tried to open trade with the Illinois Confederacy in 1679, Perrot and the other Green Bay traders took advantage of the traditional animosity between the Miami and Illinois to secretly encourage the Miami and Mascouten to settle at the south end of Lake Michigan and block his access. La Salle slipped past in 1680 and built Fort Crèvecoeur on the upper Illinois River, but this new post caused the Illinois to increase their beaver hunting, the main reason for the Iroquois attacks that year.

With an extraordinary sense of timing, La Salle had left Henri de Tonti in charge of Fort Crèvecoeur and gone back to Quebec when the Iroquois attacked. Tonti and the other French abandoned the post and fled north to Green Bay where they would have starved for all the help they got from the French at La Baye, but Onanghisse's Potawatomi defied Perrot and fed them. Tonti went back later to the devastation the Iroquois had left behind in Illinois. The Iroquois returned the following year, but Tonti afterwards built Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock (Utica, Illinois) and convinced the Illinois and Miami to settle nearby and defend it. The Iroquois failure to take Fort St. Louis in 1684 is generally regarded as the turning point of the Beaver Wars. Encouraged by this victory, the French tried to organize an alliance against the Iroquois, but its first offensive was such a fiasco, Joseph La Barre, the governor of Canada, signed a treaty with the Iroquois conceding most of the Ohio Valley east of the Illinois River.

Up until this point, the French at Green Bay had ignored the trouble their rivals had gotten into down in the Illinois country and had no desire to join the fight against Iroquois. Although concerned by a Seneca attack at Mackinac in 1683, the Potawatomi and other Wisconsin tribes were angry about French trade with the Dakota and had no wish to defend French interests in the south. This changed when Jacques-Renede Denonville replaced La Barre. Orders were issued for the French to end their differences and cooperate with each other. Denonville repudiated LaBarre's treaty, built new forts and strengthened old ones. More importantly, he began to arm and organize an alliance of the Great Lakes Algonquin against the Iroquois. The Potawatomi became an important member of this alliance after it took the offensive in 1687, a date roughly coinciding with the beginning of the King William's War (1688-97) between Britain and France.

By the 1690s the Iroquois were on the defensive and retreating across the Great Lakes to their homeland in New York. This provided an opportunity for the Potawatomi and other refugee tribes to leave the overcrowded conditions near Green Bay for places with better soil and longer growing seasons. The Potawatomi began expanding south along the west side of Lake Michigan - apparently adding to their population along the way by taking in Abenaki and New England Algonquin refugees from the King Phillip's War (1675-76) who had immigrated to the Great Lakes. By 1685 there was a Potawatomi village at Milwaukee, another at Chicago in 1695, and at about the same time, almost 1,000 Potawatomi settled on the opposite corner of Lake Michigan near the St. Joseph mission which Father Allouez had established for the Miami in southwest Michigan.

By 1696 the Iroquois had been beaten and were asking for peace, but French influence had declined so much, they had difficulty persuading their allies to agree. The reason was a glut of fur on the European market had caused a drastic fall in the price of beaver. Finally willing to listen to Jesuit complaints about the corruption the fur trade was causing among Native Americans, Louis XIV issued a decree in 1696 suspending the fur trade in the Great Lakes. Without the trade goods needed by their allies, French authority collapsed. Sensing this weakness, the Iroquois offered peace and access to British traders to the Ottawa and Ojibwe if they would break with the alliance. This were refused, but suspicion grew within the alliance that the French would abandon them to make their own peace with the Iroquois. Using every possible argument, the French finally managed to convince the Algonquin to sign a treaty with the Iroquois in 1701 just as another war started with Great Britain - the Queen Anne's War (1701-13).

Most of the fighting during this war was in New England and the Canadian Maritimes, while the exhausted Iroquois (except for the Mohawk) honored their agreement with the French and remained neutral. This was fortunate, because the French alliance was unravelling without the fur trade. A fresh round of fighting broke out along the upper Mississippi in western Wisconsin during the 1690s between the Dakota, Ojibwe, Fox, Mascouten, Kickapoo, Illinois, and Miami. The Potawatomi had moved south by this time and were not a major participant. Further east, the British and Iroquois has started trading with French allies and were subverting their loyalty. After several desperate pleas from Canada explaining the situation, permission was finally given for a new post at Detroit to retain the loyalty of the Great Lakes tribes. In 1701 Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac arrived, built Fort Ponchartrain, and

invited the Ottawa and Wyandot to settle nearby. Many of them left Mackinac at this time and moved south.

Groups of Ojibwe followed and settled just to the north, but to keep French allies from trading with the British, Cadillac kept inviting other tribes to Detroit, including some groups of the Potawatomi who came during 1704. Rather than strengthening the alliance, the French within a few years reproduced the same miserable conditions which had existed in Wisconsin during the 1660s ...too many people and too few resources. Meanwhile, the Ottawa still at Mackinac in 1706 defied the French and prepared a war party to send against the Dakota. This upset the Wyandot and Miami in the vicinity so much, they were planning to punish them by attacking the Ottawa village as soon as its warriors left. However, a Potawatomi warned the Ottawa who ambushed five Miami chiefs and then attacked the Miami village driving them into the French fort. Before the fighting was over, 50 Miami, 30 Ottawa, and two French were dead, and the fighting spread to Detroit. A confusing situation, but indicative of the problems afflicting the French alliance at the time.

In response to the fighting at Mackinac, the Ottawa and Miami fought with each other near Detroit that year, and even the Wyandot, Ottawa, and Ojibwe (normally on the best of terms) were having occasional skirmishes over hunting territory in the vicinity. Aware of the tension at Detroit, the St. Joseph Potawatomi decided not to join their relatives and asked for their own trading post and garrison. Unfortunately, the French could not grant this until after the death of Louis XIV in 1715 allowed the trade suspension to be rescinded. Meanwhile, Cadillac had ignored all the warning signs and in 1710 invited the Fox to move to Detroit. Hostile to the French from the time of their first meeting, and angry about the recent Ojibwe attack that the French had encouraged to force them from the St. Croix Valley and Fox Portage in Wisconsin, 1,000 Fox arrived at Detroit accompanied by many of their Kickapoo and Mascouten allies.

The Fox were returning to what had been their homeland before the Beaver Wars, and they were not reluctant to inform the other tribes they found living there of this. Within a short time, the Potawatomi, Ottawa, Wyandot, and Ojibwe were demanding that the French order the Fox to return to Wisconsin. When the French ignored them, they took matters into their own hands, and in the spring of 1712, Ottawa and Potawatomi warriors attacked a Mascouten hunting party near the headwaters of the St. Joseph River. The Mascouten fled east to their Fox allies, and as the Fox prepared to retaliate, the French attempted to stop them. At this point, the Fox, Mascouten, and Kickapoo decided to attack Fort Ponchartrain. The first assault failed and was followed by a siege, but a relief force of Potawatomi, Ottawa, Wyandot, and Ojibwe arrived and fell upon the Fox from the rear. Only 100 Fox escaped during the slaughter which followed. Most of these fled to the Iroquois, but some returned to Wisconsin with the Mascouten and Kickapoo. Once there, they joined the Fox who had remained behind and began taking their revenge on the French and their allies for the massacre at Detroit.

The Potawatomi were one of the most important French allies during the First Fox War (1712-16), but the French alliance was in such disarray that it took almost three years to gather an effective force to go after the Fox. In 1715 a French-Potawatomi expedition defeated the Kickapoo and Mascouten and forced them to make a separate peace, but the Fox refused to quit and gathered into a fort in southern Wisconsin. The following year, Louis de Louvigny arrived with a large party of Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Ottawa warriors and laid siege. The French were finally forced to withdraw and afterwards offered peace. The Fox accepted, but both sides remained bitter and distrustful of the other. In the years following, the Fox fought with the Illinois and Osage and continued to antagonize the French. Under pressure from the Potawatomi and other allies to do something about the Fox, the French decided on drastic measures.

[Although not official policy until approved by the king in 1732, the drastic measures turned out to be genocide - after a war of extermination, any Fox who survived would be sold as slaves to the West Indies.](#) By this time, the Fox had aggravated enough tribes, there was little opposition within the alliance to this. After isolating the Fox from their Dakota and Winnebago allies, the French attacked in 1728.

The initial French offensive of the Second Fox War (1728-37 accomplished little, but the Fox afterwards managed to "shoot themselves in the foot" by alienating the only allies they had left, the Mascouten and Kickapoo. When these tribes went over to the French, the Fox were isolated and battered from all sides. In 1730 about 1,000 Fox decided to accept an Iroquois offer of sanctuary and leave Wisconsin, but crossing northern Illinois, they got into a fight with the Illinois. Forced to build a temporary fort to protect their women and children, the Illinois surrounded them and called in the French.

The French and their allies (including Detroit and St. Joseph Potawatomi) came from every direction. After a 23-day siege, the Fox were starving and attempted to escape one night during a thunderstorm, but the French and their allies caught up and killed all of them. All that remained after this were the 500 Fox who had stayed in Wisconsin. They fled to the Sauk west of Green Bay, and the French went after them in 1734. When the Sauk refused to surrender the Fox, they were attacked, but the French commander was killed during the assault. In the confusion which followed, the Fox and Sauk abandoned their village and fled west across the Mississippi into Iowa. The French sent another expedition against them in 1736, but by this time their allies were having doubts about genocide. At a meeting in Montreal in the spring of 1737, the Potawatomi and Ottawa asked the French to forgive the Sauk, while the Menominee and Winnebago made a similar request on behalf of the Fox. Faced with a revolt of their allies, a war with the pro-British Chickasaw which had closed the lower Mississippi, and fighting between the Ojibwe and Dakota in Minnesota, the French reluctantly agreed.

By 1718 the Potawatomi had replaced the Miami at St. Joseph. Their warriors continued to serve as loyal French allies and raided the pro-British Chickasaw and [Cherokee](#) during 1740-41, but the French had a more serious problem with the increasing competition from British traders. To meet this, the French reoccupied or opened new posts at Michilimackinac, La Baye, Ouiatenon, Chequamegon, St. Joseph, Pimitoui, Miamis, Niagara, De Chartes, and Vincennes, but the damage was done. British goods were generally cheaper and better than what the French could offer, and by 1728, 80% of the beaver at Albany was coming from French allies. This became critical during the King George's War (1744-48) after a British blockade of the St. Lawrence cut the supply of French trade goods. As during the Queen Anne's War, there was little fighting in the Great Lakes during this conflict, but the Potawatomi joined other Great Lakes warriors to travel to Montreal and defend Quebec from a British invasion which never came.

However, economic warfare in the Ohio Valley between the British and French continued throughout the war and in the years which followed. Ohio was claimed by the Iroquois by right of conquest, the French by right of discovery, and the British since the Treaty of Ryswick (1697) had placed the Iroquois under their protection. In truth, none of these claims were valid, and Ohio belonged to the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo (Ohio Iroquois) who lived there. Nominally members of the Iroquois Covenant Chain, the Ohio tribes were independent of the League and had no wish to be dominated by the Iroquois, British, or French. But they did want to trade, and because of this, British traders were able to visit Ohio and trade directly. This proved irresistible to French allies, and in 1748 Orontony's Wyandot at Sandusky burned their French trading post and attempted to organize a revolt against the French at Detroit. This collapsed after Orontony's death in 1750, but was followed by a more dangerous conspiracy of the Miami chief Memeskia (known as La Demoiselle to the French and Old Britain to the British).

Memeskia sacked a French trading post on the Wabash and moved his people east to a new village at Pickawillany (Piqua, Ohio), where he allowed the British to build a trading post. He then invited other Miami, as well as Kickapoo, Illinois and Potawatomi to come to his village to trade. The French noted the defections from their alliance when the Potawatomi and other tribes ceased their attacks on the Chickasaw and Cherokee south of the Ohio River. The French tried to organize an attack on Memeskia to force the Ohio tribes to expel the British, but the Detroit tribes (including the Potawatomi) were thinking of dumping the French for the British and, using the excuse of recent smallpox epidemic, refused to act. In desperation, Charles Langlade, a Métis (mixed blood), gathered a war party of 250 Ojibwe and Ottawa at Mackinac and in June, 1752 attacked and destroyed Pickawillany. "Old Britain"

and 30 Miami were killed and the British trading post looted and burned. The attack sent a chilling message to French allies thinking of breaking with the alliance to trade with the British.

By fall, the Potawatomi, Miami, and [Wyandot](#) had apologized to the French and renewed their attacks on the Chickasaw. This encouraged the French to construct a line of forts in western Pennsylvania to block British access to Ohio. Virginia in 1754 sent a young militia major named George Washington to demand the French abandon their new forts, but he got into a fight with French soldiers which started the French and Indian War (1755-63). The Potawatomi supported the French throughout this war, first sending warriors to defeat Braddock's army at Fort Duquesne in 1755, and then east to Montreal to take part in the French campaigns in northern New York in 1756-57. It was during the siege of Fort William Henry in 1757 that their warriors contracted smallpox and brought it back to their villages. The epidemic which swept through the Great Lakes during the winter of the 1757-58 took most of the French allies out of the war. Quebec fell to the British in September, 1759 and Montreal surrendered the following summer.

The French were finished in North America. British soldiers occupied most of their forts in the Great Lakes later that year, and only Fort de Chartres in the Illinois country remained under French control. In 1761 the Potawatomi and other members of the French alliance met with Sir William Johnson at Detroit to learn what to expect from their new British "fathers." Johnson hoped to continue the old French system, but he was overruled by Jeffrey Amherst, the British commander in North America. Amherst despised American colonials, so his feelings about Native Americans are not difficult to imagine. As an economy measure, he ordered an end to the annual presents given to chiefs, increased the prices of trade goods, and restricted supply, especially of gunpowder and whiskey. He then left it to Johnson to deal with the dissatisfaction which was not long in coming. At the Detroit meeting, Johnson discovered that the Seneca were circulating a war belt calling for a general uprising.

Johnson squashed this, but calls for revolt continued. A drought in the Ohio Valley during summer of 1762 brought famine that winter. At the same time Neolin, the Delaware prophet, began preaching a return to traditional native values and a rejection of the whiteman's trade goods. The St. Joseph Potawatomi, who by this time were heavily Catholic due to the Jesuit mission, accepted many of his ideas but gave them Christian interpretations. However, Neolin's most important convert was Pontiac, the Ottawa chief at Detroit, who decided a return to traditional values meant getting rid of the British and bringing back the French. In meetings during the spring of 1763, he secretly organized an revolt which, when it struck in May, captured nine of the twelve British forts west of the Appalachians. The Detroit Potawatomi joined Pontiac's attack on Fort Detroit, while the St. Joseph Potawatomi overwhelmed their British garrison. However, the uprising collapsed after the failure to take Forts Pitt, Niagara, and (most importantly) Detroit.

Pontiac was forced to abandon the siege and flee west to northern Indiana. As the British rushed troops to the area, the intractable Amherst was replaced by Thomas Gage and the Proclamation of 1763 was issued halting further settlement west of the Appalachians. The Potawatomi and other tribes attended a conference with Johnson at Fort Niagara in July, 1764 and made peace. Gage ended the trade restrictions, and Pontiac signed his own peace in 1766 promising never to fight the British again. Unpopular among his own people because of this and his failure to capture Detroit, he settled in northern Illinois where he still enjoyed a considerable following. There were rumors Pontiac was secretly trying to organize another uprising in the west, but in 1769 he was murdered by a Peoria (Illinois) at the establishment of a British trader in Cahokia. The British were suspected of arranging his assassination, but the wrath of his supporters fell on the Illinois. The Potawatomi allied with the Ojibwe, Fox, Sauk, Kickapoo, Winnebago and Ottawa and avenged Pontiac by destroying the Illinois Confederation.

Fewer than 400 Illinois survived this war to reach the protection of the French settlement at Kaskaskia. The victors divided their abandoned lands among themselves, with the Prairie Potawatomi expanding down the Illinois River as far as present-day Peoria. With the Prairie Potawatomi controlling most of northeast Illinois and southeast Wisconsin, the St. Joseph Potawatomi began to push south into northern

Indiana. This was particularly annoying to the Miami, who had been giving ground to the Potawatomi for many years, and relations between these two tribes were strained. Their dispute was poorly timed, since the American colonists had forced the British to rescind the Proclamation of 1763 and negotiate with the Iroquois to open the Ohio Valley for settlement. Illegal squatters had started coming after the Pontiac Rebellion, but after the Iroquois cession of Ohio at Fort Stanwix in 1768, the trickle became a flood.

Shawnee protests to the Iroquois brought threats of extermination if they resisted, and in 1769 the Shawnee made overtures of alliance to the Potawatomi, Illinois, Kickapoo, Wea, Piankashaw, Miami, Wyandot, Ottawa, [Delaware](#), Mascouten, Ojibwe, Cherokee and Chickasaw. Meetings were held on the Scioto River in 1770 and 1771, but William Johnson's threats of war with the Iroquois kept other tribes from helping the Shawnee and Mingo during Lord Dunmore's War (1774). Afterwards, the British washed their hands of the whole affair, withdrew most of their garrisons, and sat back to watch. Their detachment ended with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War (1775-83) when they armed the Ohio tribes and urged them to attack American settlements. Because the disputed lands were in Kentucky and Ohio, only the Shawnee and Chickamauga Cherokee were involved at first, but by 1779 the British had brought the Detroit and St. Joseph Potawatomi, Saginaw and Mackinac Ojibwe, Delaware, Wyandot, Miami, Ottawa, and Kickapoo into the fight with the "Long Knives" (American frontiersmen) along the Ohio River.

France had given Louisiana to Spain in 1763 rather than see it fall into British hands, and the Prairie Bands of the Potawatomi and Kickapoo in central Illinois had become closer to the French traders from St. Louis than the British. Because of this and their remoteness to Ohio, they had remained neutral during the first years of the Revolution and not participated in the attacks on the Kentucky settlements. This changed when George Rogers Clark and his army of 200 Kentucky frontiersmen arrived in the Illinois country in 1778 and surprised the small British garrison at Kaskaskia. Clark also took Cahokia and won the support of the French in the area, but he hated Native Americans and spurned their offers to help capture Detroit. The opportunity slipped through his fingers, and that fall, Colonel Henry Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit (known in Kentucky as the "hair buyer" because he paid for American scalps), recaptured Fort Sackville at Vincennes with a force of Detroit warriors and French. Clark made a daring mid-winter trek across southern Illinois to Vincennes, and after a brief siege, Hamilton surrendered in February, 1779.

The British and French were spared, but Clark and his men executed the warriors with tomahawks. Among the victims were Detroit Potawatomi, Ottawa, Wyandot, and Saginaw Ojibwe, and although Clark had once received overtures of cooperation from almost every tribe in Illinois who traded with the French and Spanish (Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Ottawa, Illinois, Winnebago, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, and Miami), this brutality turned most of them against the Americans. For the remainder of the war, only the Milwaukee Potawatomi of Letourneau (Blackbird or Siggenauk) and some of the Illinois remained friendly. During the winter of 1779-80, the British planned an offensive, not only to reclaim the Illinois country, but to seize control of the entire Mississippi basin. By this time, Spain had entered the war against the British, so part of the offensive was directed against them. While British naval forces attacked Spanish posts on the Gulf of Mexico, a column under Captain Henry Bird left Detroit with 600 warriors (150 Potawatomi) in April, 1780 and, adding another 600 as it moved south, struck the settlements south of the Ohio River. Before turning back, Bird's army left a trail of death and destruction throughout Kentucky.

Meanwhile, another expedition under Captain Emanuel Hesse moved down the Illinois River to attack St. Louis. However, the Spanish and French were warned of its approach and had ample time to prepare. When the assault by 950 British and their allies (Ojibwe, Fox, Sauk, Winnebago, Dakota, and Potawatomi) finally occurred on May 26th, it was repulsed after heavy losses to both sides. An attack against Cahokia across the Mississippi also failed, and the British retreated without result. Potawatomi participation in the remaining years of the war varied considerably. The Detroit bands remained active in the British cause and in 1782 helped defeat the Colonel William Crawford's army (June) and Kentucky

militia at Blue Licks (August) during which Daniel Boone's son Israel was killed. The Milwaukee Potawatomi sided with the Spanish and Americans, and at their suggestion, the Spanish in 1780 launched a retaliatory raid against the British post at St. Joseph, but the British caught the raiders in northern Illinois and killed or captured most of them.

After the Spanish and French entered the war, the loyalty of the heavily Catholic St. Joseph Potawatomi to the British was wavering, so before launching a second attack on St. Joseph, the Spanish promised them a share of the plunder. In January, 1781 Spanish troops of Capt. Eugene Poudre destroyed the British fort and trading post without any resistance from the Potawatomi. The St. Joseph Potawatomi were reluctant British allies at best, and their encroachment into northern Indiana created problems. In 1780 the Miami had attacked a Potawatomi war party heading south to attack the Kentucky settlements, and, to keep both tribes fighting Americans instead of each other, had required Simon De Peyster, the British agent at Detroit, to use all of his skills as a mediator.

The Revolutionary War "officially" ended in 1783 with Treaty of Paris which, because of George Rogers Clark's conquest of the Illinois country, placed the western boundary of the United States at the Mississippi River. "Unofficially," the war continued to 1794 because the British, using the pretext of debts owed to British loyalists (Tories), refused to withdraw from its forts on American territory until these were paid. This, of course, was impossible unless the Americans could sell the lands in Ohio, and the British knew this. Although they urged their native allies to stop attacking American settlements in 1783, they were also encouraging an alliance to keep the Americans out of Ohio. In the fall of 1783, the alliance was formed at a meeting at Sandusky. The British did not attend, but they sent the Mohawk Joseph Brant to speak on their behalf and let it be known they would support the alliance in the event of war with the Americans.

The membership ultimately included: Potawatomi, Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Mingo, Iroquois (Canadian), Miami, Wea, Piankashaw, Fox, Sauk, Ottawa, Ojibwe, Kickapoo, and Chickamauga (Cherokee). With more than 2,000 warriors, the alliance was a formidable barrier to American expansion in the Ohio Valley. After forcing the Iroquois to acknowledge their previous cession of Ohio at Fort Stanwix in 1768, the United States tried to establish a boundary with the Ohio tribes through treaty. However, the Americans refused to deal with the alliance because they considered it a British plot (which it was). Instead, they signed treaties with individual tribes at Fort McIntosh (1785) and Fort Finney (1786). Since the chiefs signing these agreements did not represent the alliance (and often their own tribe), the treaties were worthless. To make matters worse, the American commissioners did not represent their frontier citizens who had rid themselves of one government trying to keep them out of Ohio and were ready to take on the one in Philadelphia if it stood in their way.

Frontiersmen simply ignored the treaty and moved onto native lands. The tiny American army could not stop this, and when native warriors tried to remove the squatters, there was war. The first council fire of the alliance was at the Shawnee village of Waketomica, but it was burned by the Americans in 1786 and the capital was moved to Brownstown, a Wyandot village near Detroit. As alliance warriors and frontiersmen exchanged raids and atrocities, the government made a final attempt to resolve the dispute by treaty. In December, 1787 the governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair, requested a meeting to be held at the falls of Muskingum River. The alliance met to determine its position, and it was agreed to accept the Muskingum as the boundary. However, there was opposition, and Joseph Brant left the meeting in disgust and went back to Ontario.

The Miami, Kickapoo, and Shawnee also pulled out, but the Delaware, Wyandot, and Detroit tribes (including the Potawatomi) decided to attend. The Fort Harmar Treaty (January, 1789) was the first treaty between the United States and Potawatomi. Unfortunately, it was meant very little. There were no Potawatomi villages in Ohio, so they had little stake in the outcome. The signatures of the other tribes were more important, but after the fighting resumed that summer, the alliance was dominated by the militant Shawnee and Miami, and the Americans decided to use force. The initial battles of Little Turtle's War (1790-94) ended in disaster for the Americans. Led by the Miami war chief Little Turtle,

alliance warriors inflicted the worst defeats an American army ever received from Native Americans: Harmar (1790) and St. Clair (1791).

But the Americans could not afford to quit, and President Washington sent "Mad Anthony" Wayne to Ohio. Wayne was anything but "mad." During the next two years, he trained his "Legion," a large force of regulars to back the frontier militia, and began careful preparations for an offensive to destroy the alliance villages in northwest Ohio. Meanwhile, continuous warfare was taking its toll on the alliance which could not feed its warriors for extended periods. Complaining about the lack of food, the Fox and Sauk left in 1792. At the same time, General Charles Scott attacked the villages on the lower Wabash and captured a large number of women and children which forced the Wabash tribes (Wea, Piankashaw, and Kickapoo) to make a separate peace. By the time it was defeated by the Americans at Fallen Timbers in 1794, the alliance had less than 800 warriors. During their retreat after the battle, the warriors watched the British close the gates of Fort Miami to them rather than risk a confrontation with Wayne's army.

In November the British signed the Jay Treaty resolving their differences with the United States and agreeing to leave their forts on American territory. Abandoned by the British, the alliance chiefs assembled at Fort Greenville in August, 1795 and signed a treaty ceding Ohio except the northwest. Negotiations involved an unusually large number from the alliance (the Americans counted 1,130 attended). Of these, 240 were Potawatomi, and the 24 signatures of their chiefs represent the largest delegation to sign the treaty. Although the Potawatomi did not surrender any of their land at Greenville, they received \$1,000 for signing. More than 60 of the Potawatomi who attended mysteriously got sick and died afterwards, and the British claimed they had been poisoned by the Americans. There was no evidence to support this, but the suspicion remained and prepared the way for Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet.

An unhappy peace settled across the Ohio Valley afterwards, but in the wake of military defeat, it was a terrible period of social disintegration and breakdown of tribal authority. The Shawnee chief Blue Jacket tried to resurrect the council at Brownstown in 1801, but his efforts were thwarted by Little Turtle and the other "peace chiefs" trying to reach an accommodation with the Americans. They had an impossible task. The Americans had finally gotten Ohio in 1795 but would not be satisfied until they had the entire Ohio Valley. William Henry Harrison arrived as the new governor of the Northwest Territory in 1800 with specific instructions to end native title to their lands through treaty, and he set about his work. The Potawatomi and others signed treaties at Fort Wayne (1803), Fort Industry (1805), and Grouseland (1805), ceding portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, but it was at the Detroit treaty signed in November, 1807 ceding the southeast quarter of lower Michigan where the Potawatomi for the first time were required to surrender some of their own land. The Americans took a little more at Brownstown in 1808.

It was a good time for a prophet and one arose among the Shawnee. His name originally was Lalawethika, and he was known among the [Shawnee](#) as a drunkard and loud-mouth. In 1805 Lalawethika received a spiritual vision and changed his name to Tenskwatawa "the open door." Unwilling to struggle with his Shawnee name, Americans simply called him The Prophet. His message similar to the Delaware Prophet Neolin's in 1763 - return to traditional values and reject trade goods and whiskey. His brother Tecumseh, a respected war chief, added a political element to this - no more land cessions to the Americans. To make this point, the brothers established their village at the treaty line on the abandoned grounds of Fort Greenville. Interest in Tenskwatawa grew quickly, but many turned away after his followers killed some of the Delaware and Wyandot for witchcraft. Tenskwatawa recovered by predicting an eclipse in 1806 (some would say with the help of a British almanac), but he was never able to win widespread support among the important tribes of the old alliance, including the Shawnee.

This was partly due to the opposition of the "peace chiefs" who saw the new movement as a threat to their authority. Instead, most support for Tecumseh and the Prophet came from the tribes farther west, the Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Sauk, Fox, and Winnebago who were allies in a bitter war with the Osage

west of the Mississippi. They had not yet lost land to the Americans but realized it was only a matter of time. Upset by the American purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, the Dakota sent a wampum belt to the Fox, Sauk, and Potawatomi in 1805 asking them to end their war with the Osage and join an alliance against the Americans. Unsure of what to do, a Potawatomi and Sauk delegation visited the British at Fort Malden (Amherstburg, Ontario) to ask for their support. The British refused to commit themselves, but rumors of war circulated across the frontier during 1806. By the time Tecumseh visited Fort Malden in 1808, the British had changed their minds and gave him every encouragement.

The Prophet's message found fertile ground among the Prairie Potawatomi, especially the band of Main Poche (French for Withered Hand), a war chief and shaman who had spent his life fighting the Osage in Missouri. Main Poche and his people visited the Prophet at Greenville in 1807 and extended an invitation to relocate his village to Tippecanoe in western Indiana. Tenskwatawa accepted and left Greenville in the spring of 1808. There was nothing accidental about the location of Prophetstown to Tippecanoe. It was disputed ground between the Potawatomi and Miami and was intended as an insult to a most important peace chief, Little Turtle of the Miami. In September, 1809 the peace chiefs of the Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Delaware, and Miami met with Governor Harrison at Fort Wayne and ceded over three million acres of southern Illinois and Indiana. When Tecumseh learned of this, he denounced the treaty, threatened the chiefs who signed with death, and promised the provisions would never be carried out.

He made good on his threat when his Wyandot followers executed the old chief Leatherlips in 1810 and sent the alliance wampum belts to Tippecanoe. The reaction of the peace chiefs meeting in Brownstown was to condemn the Prophet as a witch. Tecumseh met twice with Harrison at Vincennes, but their talks almost ended in armed confrontations. In the fall of 1811, Tecumseh left Prophetstown to recruit the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Cherokee against the Americans. Before leaving, he warned his brother to avoid a fight with Americans while he was gone. He would have done better to tell Main Poche the same thing. Launching his own protest against the Fort Wayne Treaty, his Potawatomi attacked settlements in southern Illinois throwing the frontier into alarm and bringing out militia. Harrison seized upon this to gather an army and march on Tippecanoe. When it arrived in November, Tenskwatawa ignored his brother's instructions and ordered an attack on Harrison's camp. During the battle which followed, the natives were forced to withdraw, and the Americans captured and burned Prophetstown.

The military defeat at the Battle of Tippecanoe was of little consequence compared with the damage done to Tenskwatawa's reputation as a prophet. When Tecumseh returned in January, he had to rebuild his alliance. He had little time for this, since the War of 1812 (1812-14) began in June. Other than Main Poche, the Potawatomi did not automatically join Tecumseh and the British. Thanks to Thomas Forsyth, the American Indian agent at Peoria, the bands of Black Partridge and Gomo (Nasima) on the Illinois River remained neutral, while the Milwaukee Potawatomi stood by the Americans as they had done during the Revolution. The St. Joseph and Huron bands were divided, with some following the Brownstown council's decision to remain neutral and others joining Tecumseh. However, Main Poche was able to convince the Prairie Potawatomi to attack Fort Dearborn (Chicago). Besieged and surrounded the fort's garrison in August received orders from General William Hull to abandon the fort and join him at Detroit.

Negotiations were held for a safe withdrawal, but on the night before they were to leave, the fort's commander ordered the fort's powder supply thrown down a well rather than leave it for the Potawatomi as promised. The Indian agent at the fort was William Wells. Captured as a child, he had been adopted by the Miami and was married to Little Turtle's daughter. When Wells saw what was done with the powder, he blackened his face in the traditional Miami manner and prepared for death. On August 16th, the 42-man garrison marched out of the fort and headed east. They had not gone far when the ruined powder was discovered, and they were attacked. Everyone was killed, including Wells. The Potawatomi mutilated his body and ate his heart. Black Partridge arrived too late to save the garrison, but he buried

the dead and protected the few civilian survivors from massacre until they could be sent safely to the British at Detroit.

Detroit was British because on that same day, General Hull had surrendered his command to a smaller force without a fight - an act which earned him the distinction of being the only American general court-martialed for cowardice and sentenced to death by firing squad (later pardoned by President Madison). Because of the British victory at Detroit and the efforts of the British Indian agent, Robert Dickson, the Potawatomi and warriors from many tribes joined Tecumseh at Detroit, but Black Partridge, if anything, still leaned towards the Americans. Unfortunately, Illinois territorial governor Ninian Edwards needed to respond to the Fort Dearborn massacre and attacks on Fort Madison (Iowa), and in November, 1812, sent an expedition from Fort Edwards (Edwardsville) under Colonel William Russell to attack the hostile Kickapoo and Potawatomi villages on the Illinois River. As always, the innocent were easier to find than the guilty, and the militia attacked Black Partridge's village on Peoria Lake while he was absent helping to rescue one of Forsyth's relatives. The attack in the middle of the night killed 25-30 Potawatomi including Black Partridge's favorite daughter and her child. After this, all of the Potawatomi were fighting the Americans.

Potawatomi warriors went to Ohio and became a major part of Tecumseh's army. They defeated the Americans at the Raisin River, but after William Henry Harrison assumed command of the American forces, the tide turned. The British and their allies failed to take Fort Meigs in northwest Ohio and afterwards began a retreat towards Detroit. Discouraged by the heavy losses and boredom of siege warfare, Main Poche left to pursue his own war against the Americans in Illinois. However, Shabbona and the other Potawatomi remained with Tecumseh. After Perry's victory over the British fleet on Lake Erie, Detroit was abandoned as Harrison's army approached. Tecumseh was killed at the Battle of the Thames in October, 1813 while covering the British retreat across southern Ontario, and the last chance for Native Americans to stop the Americans from taking their land died with him.

Although native resistance generally ended after the death of Tecumseh, Potawatomi and Kickapoo attacks in Illinois resulted in an almost separate conflict known as the Peoria War (1813). In August, 150 soldiers from St. Louis came to Peoria by keelboat and began building Fort Clark. An attack by Black Partridge's Potawatomi was repulsed, and soon afterwards, reinforcements arrived in the form of 800 mounted rangers commanded by former Missouri governor Benjamin Howard. The troops destroyed two nearby villages (including Gomo's). Meanwhile, Roger's Rangers from St. Louis attacked and destroyed the Kickapoo-Potawatomi village at "The Bluffs" on the Mississippi (Quincy, Illinois). Faced with overwhelming military force, the Potawatomi ended their last war with the Americans. Sanatuwa and Iatapucky made peace that fall, and Black Partridge met with William Clark (Lewis and Clark fame and younger brother of George Rogers) at St. Louis in January, 1814. Gomo began supplying Fort Clark's garrison with meat and kept the peace even after whites murdered some of his hunters.

The War of 1812 is generally thought to have ended in a stalemate between Great Britain and the United States, but for the Native Americans it was total defeat. With Tecumseh dead and British support gone, there was nothing to stop the Americans. New agencies and forts were added at Green Bay, Chicago, Rock Island, Peoria, Prairie du Chien, St. Paul, and Peoria. The first treaties signed by the Potawatomi after the war made peace and forgave injuries: Greenville (1814) - tribes allied with the Americans (Delaware, Seneca, Shawnee, and Wyandot) made peace with the Miami, Kickapoo, Ottawa and Potawatomi; Portage des Sioux (1815) - Prairie Potawatomi made peace with the Americans; and Spring Wells (1815) - Detroit Potawatomi and other Tecumseh allies agreed to peace and were allowed to return from Canada. However, the Prophet remained in Canada until he was lured back to the United States in 1824 by Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan to convince the Shawnee to leave Ohio and remove to Kansas.

After this, the Americans got down to the business of taking native lands east of the Mississippi. The usual method was to force tribes into smaller areas where their only real income was annuities.

Government traders (the only persons allowed to trade with Native Americans) extended credit, and as

debts increased, the tribes were forced to sell land to pay. Because the Potawatomi were north of the early settlements, they did not lose much of their land until 1821, but they were called upon earlier to surrender claims to land occupied by other tribes: St. Louis (1816) - Potawatomi surrender claim to western Illinois lands ceded by the Sauk and Fox in 1804; Fort Meigs (1817) - Wyandot ceded three million acres of Ohio, but the Detroit Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe lost only 500,000 acres; and St. Marys (1818) - Potawatomi abandon claims to lands in Indiana south of the Wabash and ceded a narrow strip north of the river.

The treaty signed at Chicago in 1821 was the first major land cession by the Potawatomi since 1807 and set the pattern for things to come. The St. Joseph bands surrendered a large tract in southwest Michigan (and a small strip of northern Indiana in exchange for reservations for the individual bands. Four years later, the Forest Potawatomi in Wisconsin participated in the Grand Council at Prairie du Chein (1825) which attempted to prevent intertribal warfare along the upper Mississippi by creating boundaries between tribal territories. The Americans continued to whittle away at Potawatomi holdings with the Wabash Treaty (1826) taking another narrow strip of Indiana north of the Wabash, while the 1827 treaty with the Huron Potawatomi completed the establishment of reservations in Michigan by consolidating several bands and moving them away from the Chicago-Detroit highway.

The treaty at Prairie du Chein in 1825 had little effect on the warfare on the upper Mississippi, but it was enough for American miners to rush into the lead mining area of northwest Illinois and southwest Wisconsin which resulted in a brief war with the Winnebago (Winnebago War) in 1827. In a treaty signed at Green Bay in 1828, the Winnebago, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe surrendered their claims to the area. That same year, the St. Joseph Potawatomi ceded another small area along Lake Michigan which included parts of Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, and in response to growing white settlement, the Prairie Potawatomi in 1829 gave up part of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin and agreed to a series of reservations. Within the brief period of eight years, the Potawatomi lost 70% of their land and allowed themselves to be confined on small reservations where it was almost impossible to support themselves. With the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the stage was set for their removal to west of the Mississippi.

This was delayed while the government focused on getting Blackhawk's Sauk at Rock Island to accept the 1804 treaty and leave western Illinois. The opportunity came in 1831 during a war between the Fox and Dakota, when Blackhawk moved his people across the river into Iowa to defend the Fox. After the danger passed, the army refused to allow him to return to his village in Illinois. The matter would have been settled here if Blackhawk had not spent the winter in Iowa fuming and listening to the arguments of his friend Neopope and the Winnebago Prophet (White Cloud). Wampum belts arrived from the Winnebago and Potawatomi which convincing Blackhawk they would support him if he defied the Americans and crossed back into Illinois. In June he led 2,000 Sauk across the Mississippi and started the Blackhawk War (1832).

Avoiding Fort Armstrong at Rock Island, Blackhawk moved northeast up the Rock River to contact the Potawatomi and Winnebago. Although the alarm was out and the militia was assembling all over Illinois, there had been no hostilities up to this point. Blackhawk went into camp upstream from Dixon's Ferry and left for a council with the Potawatomi. At this meeting, it became clear that Shabbona and the other Potawatomi chiefs would not join him, and Blackhawk decided to return to Iowa. A messenger was dispatched to request safe passage from the army, but he had no sooner left than mounted militia arrived and prepared to attack his camp. Blackhawk tried to arrange a truce, but his messengers were taken prisoner and the next group was fired upon. The militia then killed their prisoners and charged after the Sauk, only to panic when they ran into what they thought was an ambush. At the Battle of Sycamore Creek (Stillman's Defeat), 250 mounted militia were routed by less than 40 Sauk warriors.

Although he had stayed with Tecumseh until his death in 1813, Shabbona had accepted the outcome and afterwards tried to get along with the Americans. His influence was the main reason the Potawatomi had refused to support Blackhawk, but after the Sauk victory at Sycamore Creek, several Potawatomi bands

were considering fighting the Americans. Shabbona rode to the scattered villages to stop this, but at Big Foot's village, his arguments fell on deaf ears, and he was taken prisoner. Some Potawatomi felt this was an affront to a chief who had come for a council, and he was released but had to flee for his life. Aware that some Potawatomi warriors were planning to join Blackhawk and avenge old injuries from settlers in the area, Shabbona rode all night and warned the whites to leave.

Some did not listen, and Potawatomi warriors killed 16 whites at Indian Creek (near Ottawa). Shabbona volunteered his people as scouts for the Americans during the pursuit of the Sauk into Wisconsin. Afterwards, he was hailed as the "whiteman's friend," but this did not prevent the cession of five million acres at the Treaty of Chicago (September, 1832) or the removal of his people to Iowa. Shabbona got to keep a small reserve in Illinois for his loyalty and service. The Sauk never forgave him for what they considered a betrayal, and Neopope made an unsuccessful attempt in Kansas to assassinate him during the fall of 1837. This forced Shabbona to return to Illinois until Neopope died in 1849. He lived with his people in Kansas for the next two years, but when he returned to Illinois in 1851, he discovered whites have taken his land. Almost 80 at the time, Shabbona cried. He died in 1859 and was buried at Ottawa. In 1903 white citizens erected a monument in his honor but never returned his land.

The Prairie Potawatomi were removed in 1834 along with Ojibwe and Ottawa of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin and assigned a land between the Missouri and Little Platte Rivers known as the Platte Purchase. Some bands refused to leave and moved north to lands belonging to the Menominee and Ojibwe. A few went to Canada to escape. In 1836 the southern part of the Platte Purchase was added to the state of Missouri. A brief war ensued (Heatherly War) that year after the Potawatomi killed two white men. Army dragoons and Missouri militia attacked the Missouri Band of the Sauk and Fox in retaliation (a not-too subtle suggestion to move), and in 1837 the Potawatomi were relocated north of the Missouri line to a reservation near Council Bluffs. It was not a peaceful place. In 1841 a hunting party of 16 Delaware and a Potawatomi were attacked by the Dakota near the Sioux Fork of Mink Creek in Iowa. Only the Potawatomi escaped to reach the Sauk and Fox villages. A Sauk and Fox war party caught the Dakota raiders and killed them.

The removal of the Potawatomi of the Woods from Michigan and Indiana did not proceed as smoothly. Rather than agree to immediate removal, they signed two treaties in October, 1832 (Tippecanoe or Wabash Treaties) ceding most of their remaining land in exchange for reserves and annual annuities. This temporary solution continued while American agent A.C. Pepper negotiated a series of treaties with the individual bands (four in 1834 and eight in 1836) to cede their reserves and agree to removal. Once this was done, a collective agreement with five bands was signed in February, 1837 at Washington, D.C. The chiefs signed, but there was widespread resistance to this agreement. Some bands simply slipped across the border into Ontario where they have remained ever since. Others were not so passive, and the chief at Nottawaseepe was poisoned by his own people while trying to convince them to accept removal. Menominee and his band at Twin Lakes, Indiana refused to sign any of the treaties. Confronted at a meeting in July, 1838, he still refused to sign or leave Indiana.

Indiana governor David Wallace sent General John Tipton to force removal. He arrived at Menominee's village on August 30th and arrested every Potawatomi there. Menominee was thrown into a caged wagon. The soldiers burned the village, and on September 4th, 859 Potawatomi departed on what they would call the "Trail of Death." Not as nearly as famous as the Cherokee Trail of Tears, it was every bit as deadly. The second day out, the first child died, and 51 Potawatomi became too sick to continue. By the time they reached Logansport, four more children were dead. The 300 who were sick required a halt so a hospital could be erected. The march continued across northern Illinois until it reached the ferry crossing the Mississippi at Quincy, Illinois. The Potawatomi camped outside the town for a few days while the ferry carried their baggage across. When Sunday came, more than 300 of these "wild Indians" attended mass at the local Catholic church. The church was less than a half mile from the site of the Potawatomi village destroyed by Roger's Rangers in 1813.

Less than 700 Potawatomi arrived at Osawatomie in November. Half of the graves marking their route were filled with their children. Among the casualties was Father B. Petit who had volunteered to accompany his congregation on their journey to Kansas, but he became ill when they reached the Illinois River and died at St. Louis in February, 1839. Some Potawatomi remained behind and hid for many years. Laws were passed as late as 1870 to force their removal but never enforced. They remain today as part of the Huron and Pokagon Potawatomi in southern Michigan. The Potawatomi of the Woods remained on their reservation in eastern Kansas for almost eight years. In 1846 the government decided to consolidate the two groups of Potawatomi into a single tribe on one reservation. By this time the Ojibwe and Ottawa who had accompanied the Prairie Potawatomi west had merged with them, but it was still necessary to have both groups of Potawatomi sign the agreement. This was accomplished in June, and in exchange for \$850,000 for their old reserves, both groups moved to a new reservation north of Topeka in 1847.

The merger into a single tribe did not go well. The Prairie Potawatomi bands were more traditional and clashed with the more acculturated Potawatomi of the Woods. The balance between the two factions was disturbed in 1850 by the arrival from Michigan of 650 members of the Mission Band. They settled near the St. Mary's Mission. Some of the more traditional Potawatomi could not adjust to these circumstances and left with the Kickapoo for northern Mexico in 1852. Besides their internal divisions, there were serious problems with the Pawnee and other plains tribes. Many of the immigrant tribes in Kansas removed from east of the Mississippi supported themselves by becoming professional hunters, a source of considerable annoyance to the plains tribes who depended on the buffalo for food. This was aggravated by traffic through the Platte Valley to Oregon during the 1840s and the California gold rush in 1849. The increased traffic decimated the Platte River buffalo herd forcing the Pawnee and Cheyenne to hunt south in central Kansas. Hungry, they were not inclined to share this hunting territory with a bunch of "defeated Indians" from the east.

After several Pawnee attacks designed to keep them confined to their reservation villages, the Potawatomi declared war in 1850. Supported by other immigrant tribes, a battle was fought along the Blue River in June. The Pawnee lost 40 warriors in this engagement and afterwards were inclined to leave the Potawatomi alone. In 1861, Kansas became a state. Unlike the Delaware, Wyandot, and Shawnee farther east, the western location of the Potawatomi protected them from the fighting in eastern Kansas between pro- and anti-slavery forces after Kansas was opened for white settlement by the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. This was especially apparent in the case of the Potawatomi of the Woods. Their old reservation was the site of some of the worst incidents: the Potawatomi Massacre (1856); and the Marais des Cygnes Massacre two years later. Their location also kept the Potawatomi from the American Civil War.

However, it could not protect them from Kansas statehood, and having been this way once before, the Potawatomi of the Woods and the Mission Band foresaw problems. They pushed for citizenship and allotment - something unacceptable to the traditional Prairie Band. Unable to resolve their differences, the two groups divided their reservation in a treaty signed in 1861. The Prairie Potawatomi continued to hold their half in common, but the Citizen Potawatomi agreed to 160 acre allotments and citizenship - the excess land to be sold to the Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad. In 1864 the Kansas legislature called for the removal of all Indians from Kansas. Disturbed by this, Potawatomi attended the Peace on the Plains council with the Confederates on Oklahoma's Washita River in May, 1865. The meeting was well-attended (Osage, Pawnee, Iowa, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Wichita, Navaho, Mescalero, Yankton, Lakota, and Cheyenne), but Lee had already surrendered in Virginia, and the war was over.

The Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad never purchased the Citizen Potawatomi lands, so a treaty was signed in 1867 allowing their sale to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. Most of the immigrant tribes left Kansas in 1867 and moved to the Indian Territory. Two years later the Citizen Potawatomi asked permission to do likewise. After selling their remaining lands in Kansas, they moved in 1870-71 to the vicinity of Shawnee. Most of their lands were lost in 1889 to allotment and "grafting" (a polite way in Oklahoma of describing massive fraud and corruption), but most of them

chose to remain in Oklahoma. The Prairie Potawatomi remained in Kansas. Chief Wabwabashkot resisted allotment until 1895, and tribal organization disintegrated afterwards. The tribal council ceased after 1900, the agency closed in 1903, and annuities stopped six years later. By 1925 only 22% of their land remained scattered in a checkerboard pattern through the original eleven square miles of the reservation. However, the Prairie Potawatomi survived. Federal recognition has been maintained despite efforts to terminate them in 1953.

First Nations referred to in this Potawatomi History:

[Algonkin](#)

[Cherokee](#)

[Delaware](#)

[Huron](#)

[Iroquois](#)

[Kickapoo](#)

[Mascouten](#)

[Menominee](#)

[Miami](#)

[Montagnais](#)

[Neutral](#)

[Nipissing](#)

[Ojibwe](#)

[Sauk and Fox](#)

[Shawnee](#)

[Tionontati](#)

[Winnebago](#)

[Wyandot](#)

Comments concerning this "history" would be appreciated. Direct same to [Lee Sultzman](#).

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