

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

### **A History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians**

*Connie A. Jacobs*

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There is not a separate group of people called Indian; there are Indians.<sup>1</sup> There is not one tribe of Native Americans; there are tribes. Henry Dobyns estimates that by AD 1500 there were between seven million and fifteen million people living in what constitutes the present-day United States (190), and the ancestors of these original Americans today account for "more than 400 different languages and distinct cultures" (Bruchac, "Four Directions" 4). These distinctions, foundational for Native studies, are unfortunately often lost on undergraduates in their first encounter with works written by Native American authors. One of the first tasks of teachers of Native American literature, then, is to deconstruct the monolithic image students have of Native people and to enlarge student knowledge of the variety of traditions, customs, and lifestyles among Native people.

Literature helps open these cultural doors, but if students are to appreciate the context out of which a work is written, they need to learn about the specific tribe. For readers of Louise Erdrich, an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians of northern North Dakota, knowledge of her tribe's history is of major importance, since Erdrich is a contemporary Native storyteller, who, through her novels and poetry, relates her tribal history from the last half of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. To participate as listener and reader in this storytelling session necessitates an understanding of the events that shaped the lives of Erdrich's people.

### *The Historical Ojibwe*

The story begins a long time ago when the Algonkian people, living in the East long before Columbus "discovered" America, were driven out by the more powerful Iroquois. The Algonkians migrated to the Great Lakes region around AD 1200, where they gradually split into groups: Ottawa, Cree, Potawatomi, Menomini, and Ojibwe. According to Stanley Murray, sometime around 1600 the Ojibwe group began moving westward and split again into groups occupying areas around Lake Superior. He writes, "Those to the south of the lake now commonly are known as the Chippewa, and those on the north side came to be known as the Northern Ojibwe" (15), a distinction of importance when relating the history of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas. The Northern Ojibwe eventually moved into the Saskatchewan and Rainy Lakes regions, where they intermixed with their Cree kin, while Chippewa bands began moving into northern Wisconsin and northern Minnesota.

The first Europeans to come upon the various Algonkian tribes were the French fur traders, who in the late 1600s encountered the people occupying the area around Sault Sainte Marie and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The ensuing French influence from the missionaries and fur trading posts plays an important part in the economy, culture, religion, and language of the Northern Ojibwe and Chippewa people.

These early French trappers encouraged the Northern Ojibwe and Chippewa, who were hunters and gatherers before contact, to bring them fur-bearing-animal pelts for trade, primarily beaver pelts. However, by early 1802, the depletion of game forced some of the people to again move further west. Whereas most of the Chippewa remained in Minnesota (after they had driven out the Lakota) and Wisconsin,<sup>2</sup> around 1820 small groups of Chippewa from Leech Lake and Red Lake along with Northern Ojibwe moved into the Red River Valley of eastern North Dakota, where, at Pembina, the Northwest Fur Company of Montreal, the XY Company, and the Hudson Bay Company had established a trading center (Murray 15). The presence of a major post in the region ensured a secure trading partner, and soon the Ojibwe and Chippewa joined their Cree relatives to hunt a new and plentiful fur-bearing animal, the buffalo.

This newly formed North Dakota group, who spent part of their year in the Turtle Mountains of north-central North Dakota, came to be known by many names: Bungi, Plains Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Chippewa-Cree, Plains Cree, Little Shell Band, and Turtle Mountain or Pembina Band of Chippewas. From their assorted backgrounds emerges a distinctive people complete with their own language and culture. However, the Ojibwe ancestors carried many traditions and practices across the plains and prairies that continued as cultural foundations for the tribe. It is out of these traditions and tribal history that Erdrich builds her stories of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa people.

### *Traditional Woodland Culture in Erdrich's Novels*

Of prime importance was the Midéwiwin, or Grand Medicine Society, performed in the spring and fall, which according to legend the Great Bear brought to the people. The Midéwiwin ceremony, Basil Johnston explains, commemorated the gift of healing through ceremony and celebrated the lives of medicine men and women who led upright lives in conferring their gift of medicine (*Ojibway Heritage* 83). All Midés (members of the Midéwiwin) learned hunting-song and curing ceremonies, and the role of the Midé doctors was to cure the sick and aid the people.<sup>3</sup> In *Tracks*, it is Nanapush's knowledge of this traditional medicine that allows Eli to kill a moose during a time of starvation, and it is Nanapush's song that brings Eli safely home. Likewise, the other powerful practitioner of traditional medicine is Fleur Pil-lager, who, throughout the North Dakota novels, uses traditional healing knowledge. Although in the twentieth century Christianity replaced the Midéwiwin as the primary religion, through Nanapush and Fleur Erdrich asserts the power of the old ways to cure and to provide for the people.

The members of the traditional Midéwiwin additionally had the ability to turn their gift of healing into malevolent forms; fear ran rampant among the people that these powerful doctors might direct their medicine to destructive ends and witchcraft. That powerful medicine persons could and would misappropriate their healing knowledge promoted terror and a strong belief in the possibility and even the probability of such witchcraft. A sorcerer could secretly place certain herbs in a victim's food or use various entities from the victim's body—hair, nail parings, and even excrement—to fix his or her evil spell on someone (Landes, *Ojibwa Religion* 60). However fearsome these spells were, there loomed an even more frightening possibility that Christopher Vecsey describes:

Particularly fearsome to the Ojibwas were witches who posed as bears, either by wearing the skins of bears or by metamorphosing into bears. The bear-walkers owed their powers to their personal manitou, the bear, and traveled in disguise at night, causing disease among their victims.  
(*Ojibwa Religion* 148)

Erdrich suggests that Fleur can transform herself into a bear, leave the tracks of the bear, and assume the spirit of the bear, thus planting the suspicion that Fleur may, indeed, use her powers for darker purposes, as Pauline Puyat, later Sister Leopolda, avers.

Other ancient Woodland traditions that persist in the reservation novels include the Underwater Manitou, the culture hero Nanabozho, visions and hunting, the clan system, and the importance of the family. The great Under-

water Manitou evolved from a people who feared and honored the spirit who controlled the large bodies of water that served as both a food source and a highway. When the Ojibwe-Chippewa migrated from the Great Lakes into the hills and lakes of the Turtle Mountain region, they brought with them stories of the Underground Manitou, and in *Tracks*, Erdrich relates that "Misshepeshu had appeared because of the Old Man's [Fleur's father] connection" (175). Misshepeshu, one of the most powerful and important of the manitous, consequently becomes one of Fleur's spirit helpers, and she derives much of her power from his guardianship.

Nanabozho is a culture hero, for it is he whom the manitous sent into the world to teach the Ojibwe and to give them the gift of hunting and healing. According to Johnston, Nanabozho serves as the intermediary between the spirits and the people and has the power to change himself at will to perform his tasks (159-60). Erdrich transforms this traditional hero-trickster in *Tracks* into grandfather Nanapush. Nanabozho has been identified as the Great Rabbit or the White Hare (Coleman, Frogner, and Eich 56-57) that Erdrich manifests in another trickster figure, the culture hero Gerry Nanapush, whom she describes as a rabbit (*Love Medicine* 209).

One of the most important experiences in the life of the male Ojibwe was fasting for a dream or vision at the time of puberty in order to evoke a spirit that would appear as an animal. Life was difficult, and the presence of a spirit guardian helped a person to survive and to understand his life's purpose (Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* 120). This spirit then served the person as the source of power throughout his life. In *The Bingo Palace* Lipsha Morrissey, heir of the Pillager magic, seeks a vision to impress his girlfriend, Shawnee Ray, with his practice of traditional ways. However, his vision is anything but ordinary. The bear, wolf, and marten are Pillager totem animals, but they do not come to Lipsha. Instead, a spirit skunk, possibly Fleur Pillager, appears to him and admonishes him not to allow Lyman to requisition the sacred Pillager land to build a bingo palace. To show her annoyance with Lipsha's flippant attitude about the vision quest, the skunk douses him with her powerful scent, a comic scene but also one that suggests Lipsha's obvious lack of seriousness as he practices traditional ceremonies.

The Woodland Ojibwe organized themselves into patrilineal exogamous clans that originated when, according to legend, the Great Spirit ordered the crane to fly down from the sky and to find a suitable place for the people to live. When the crane saw the Great Lakes, she settled down at Sault Sainte Marie and called out for help. The bear, catfish, loon, moose, and marten answered and came to live with the people (Bleeker 31-32). Vecsey points out that these special animals became the totem animals for individual families, their personal family mark, and served to identify a person in the society and to regulate whom he or she could or could not marry (*Ojibwa Religion* 78). The bear clan's members were medicine people and fighters, and in the nov-

els, the bear is the clan totem for Fleur, the powerful medicine woman, and for Gerry Nanapush, the fighter for justice.

The family served as the most important unit in the Woodland economy, primarily because the people seasonally broke off from the main group into family bands to hunt and to gather maple syrup and rice. "Tribal families were the basic political and economic units in the woods and the first source of personal identities" (Vizenor, *People* 13). Hereditary leaders from the large families assumed leadership roles and made the important decisions for their relatives. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) disrupted this traditional leadership pattern by establishing councils and elected officials, favoring those individuals who would acquiesce to government proposals and policies. The Kashpaws, Nector and Lyman, reflect this pattern by serving first their own interests and the interests of the BIA, often at the expense of traditional tribal values and unity. What family leadership remained into the twentieth century was not in the hands of the men who, according to Vizenor, seem to have lost their pride, but rather in the hands of the women and grandparents who keep alive traditional cultural values (*Everlasting Sky* 58).

The grandparents (the term is used as a sign of respect and does not always denote a blood relative) were the ones designated by tribal custom to name a child and to instruct the child in traditional values and beliefs. Throughout a child's life, grandparents continued to play a vital and respected function; and the children were expected to honor and assist grandparents, who would care for the child if the need arose. Grandparents in Erdrich's Indian novels are the strongest and most enduring family tie, and the devoted mothers, Marie and Lulu, become in their later years the grandmothers who hold their families together and fight to maintain and restore cultural values on the reservation.

Many cultural patterns and traditions from the Woodlands survived with the Ojibwe who migrated to North Dakota. The structure of their society and their worldview was transported into the new homeland with relatively little modification: however, with the introduction of the Métis into the Plains Ojibwe (full-blooded Woodland Ojibwe, Saskatchewan Cree, and Northern Ojibwe from southern Canada), a cultural blending forever transformed the identity of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Erdrich's tribal people.

### *The Métis*

Around the 1800s, the full-bloods joined forces with the Métis. David Delorme explains what resulted:

The intermixture of Caucasoid and Mongoloid blended to produce a physical type that drew from both races, but did not approximate either

of its progenitors: divergent societies clashed and compromised to create a disparate culture—new language, religion, social order, and economy.  
(124)

In this case, it was the fur traders, particularly the French but also the English and the Scots, who, encouraged by their trading companies, married Indian women. These unions provided stability in the new country for the Europeans and produced a distinct group of people, the Métis, or mixed-bloods. Patrick Gourneau (Erdrich's maternal grandfather) points out, "The 'Mechifs' [Métis] are descendants of traders, le voyageurs, the canoe paddlers of the fur trade period and wagonmen, the Red River Cart drivers of the same period" (9). The trappers most commonly married Cree and Northern Ojibwe women, and the English and French surnames immediately marked the offspring as different from the full-bloods.

Close association with the fur companies provided the Métis with a natural entry into the economy, and Murray relates that the Métis were encouraged by the merged Northwest and Hudson Bay companies to become full-time hunters (16). They aptly adapted to this role, and when they depleted the supply of smaller fur-bearing animals, they turned to hunting larger game, the buffalo. Murray describes how, around the beginning of the 1800s, "the buffalo hunt created a cultural and political unity among the Métis" (18). By 1850, the Métis had become the dominant group in the region, numbering more than five thousand (16). Because the Métis proved to be such successful hunters, the Cree, Northern Ojibwe, and Chippewas soon joined them, and the various groups became further blended. This combined group, which hunted all the way from Minnesota to Montana, made a successful transition from one way of life, traditional woodland hunting and gathering, to another, hunting buffalo herds on the Plains.

The Métis became an integral part of the Turtle Mountain community, and Murray reports that by 1870, they were the dominant people of the group inhabiting Pembina and the Turtle Mountain region (19). Delorme estimates that the total number of Métis in the United States and Canada at this time was around thirty-three thousand (125). The mixed-bloods developed cultural traditions distinctive from those of the full-bloods, notably the jigs, reels, fiddle playing, log cabins, and Roman Catholic religion. What the two groups did share was a language. According to James Howard, "Cree was a sort of *lingua franca* in the Northern Plains during the latter half of the 19th century, and was spoken by the Assiniboine, Blackfoot, and Dakota as well as Plains-Ojibwe and Métis" (7). Cree emerged as the language of trade, while the group united through hunting developed their own pidgin dialect, Michif. Delorme explains the language as a mixture of French, Cree, and Chippewa, with roots stretching back to an "obsolete French of the type still to be heard in Normandy" (126).

### *The Turtle Mountain Reservation*

The first treaty for the Turtle Mountain group occurred in 1863 when the group ceded the Red River Valley, but as long as the area remained free from European settlers and the buffalo herds continued to supply trade, clothing, hides, and meat, the loss of this land did not significantly alter the tribe's way of life. In less than two decades, however, the Black Hills' gold rush brought hordes of settlers onto the Plains, and the extermination of the great buffalo herds was nearly complete. The Turtle Mountain band, recognizing the need for an established and permanent land base, began negotiations with the United States government.<sup>4</sup> However, among the full-bloods (Chippewa from Minnesota, Northern Ojibwe from the Rainy Lake area, and Ojibwe-Cree) and the Métis (the Canadian mixed-bloods and the mixed-bloods who considered themselves United States citizens), there was not a unified community.<sup>5</sup> By 1885, tension among the various groups threatened the life of the tribe.

At the time of negotiations for a common reservation, problems among the various factions became exacerbated for several reasons: long after the Canadian-United States border was established in 1818, the Métis continued to move back and forth across the forty-ninth parallel (Murray 14); the Métis outnumbered the full-bloods; and the mixed-bloods (in the novels, the Lazarres, Morrisseys, and Puyats) wished to accept land in severalty. Chief Little Shell (Es-sence), who had negotiated earlier treaties, was now living in the Milk River country in Montana, but he returned to North Dakota to fight for a common reservation area, and in 1882 President Chester Arthur "designated a twenty-four-by-thirty-two-mile tract in Rolette County as a reservation for the Chippewa" (Murray 23). Cyrus Beede, the agent the government sent to make recommendations and to fix the reserve site, found himself negotiating with two different groups: the thousand or so Métis, who wanted individual tracts, and the approximately three hundred full-bloods, who continued to push for a common area. Subsequent government agents "found" that many of the people on the tribal rolls were Canadian mixed-bloods who agents felt had no claim to North Dakota lands, and this misinterpretation resulted in hundreds of tribal members being stricken from the rolls. Their removal gave the government an excuse to again reduce the land base, and in 1884, "the original twenty-two township reserve was reduced to two townships" (Murray 23). As a result, the best land remained available to Anglo settlers.

The government continued to erode the land base of the Turtle Mountain people. The McCumber Agreement of 1892 "divested the Turtle Mountain Indians of their rights and title of almost 10,000,000 acres for the consideration of \$1,000,000. This 'ten cent treaty' was amended and approved by Congress on April 21, 1904" (Delorme 133). The tribe still claimed these

lands when the government summarily opened them for European settlement. The reservation was reduced to 275 quarter sections that needed to be divided among 326 families (Murray 32). The result was a dispersal of the people to lands off the reserve, with some people settling on public domain lands near the reservation, in the Trenton and Walhalla communities in North Dakota and on Graham's Island, a peninsula of Devil's Lake (Murray 32). Because the Dawes Act of 1887 gave women and children rights to land, some tribal members were allocated property as far away as Montana on the Rocky Boy Reservation. The beginning of the twentieth century found the fortunes of the Turtle Mountain people very bleak: the best farmland in the hands of the European settlers, the dispersal of the tribe, the encroachment of government-supported lumber companies, the depletion of buffalo herds, the assault of disastrous flu and smallpox epidemics, a national depression between 1893 and 1896, and questionable property taxes levied on the people of the band receiving land off the small reservation area. The 1910 census found 229 full-bloods and 2,546 mixed-bloods (only 569 of whom had received allotments) (Camp, "Working Out" 30) living on one of the smallest reservations in the United States. In *Tracks*, which opens in 1912, Erdrich describes the condition of her tribe, now removed by the United States government from most of the lands it had been occupying in North Dakota and living in blighted circumstances on a small reservation in the Turtle Mountain region.

### ***The Current Turtle Mountain Tribe***

There were some favorable developments in the twentieth century. Based on the Wheeler-Howard Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 33,435 acres near the reservation were purchased for tribal use (M. J. Schneider 131), and in 1979, the Indian Claims Commission awarded the tribe \$52,527,338 as compensation for the unfair seizure of tribal lands under the "ten cent agreement" (Delorme 133). In 1994, each tribal member was awarded an additional \$3,000 (Bruce). Belcourt remains the administrative center for the tribe, and the town contains many businesses owned by tribal members; there are a tribally owned shopping mall and junior college; Saint Ann's Catholic Church, where most of the people worship; and as of the late 1980s, a bingo hall. In January 2000, Doreen Bruce, director of the Turtle Mountain Heritage Center, reported 28,021 people on the census rolls, most of them enrolled as mixed-bloods, and 15,000 tribal members living on or near the reservation.

Since the 1800s, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians has struggled for recognition, rights, and a unified tribal identity, while barely surviving crippling epidemic diseases and governmental policies. As teachers of literature, we can help students interpret Erdrich's literary voice and her portrayal

of one tribe of Indian people who, despite overwhelming odds, have endured and are thriving in the twenty-first century.

### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>I use the terms *Indian*, *Native*, and *Native American* interchangeably throughout this essay since there is no single designation Native people agree on.

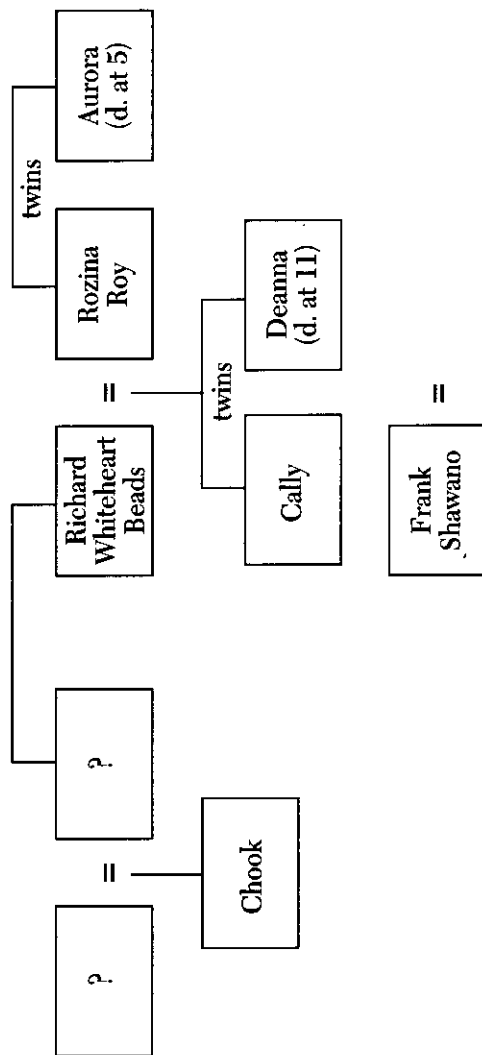
<sup>2</sup>Today there are seven Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, and White Earth (Molin 398). There are six Ojibwe reservations in Wisconsin: Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Red Cliff, St. Croix, and Sokaogon (Baker and Eckert 404).

<sup>3</sup>For detailed information on the Midéwiwin, see Landes, *Ojibwa Religion*; Dewdney; and Vecsey, *Ojibway Religion*.

<sup>4</sup>Gourneau relates, "The Ojibway began to enter into treaties with United States as early as 1815, and by the time the Treaty making period between the Indians and the United States ended they were record breaking treaty makers, having been involved in a total number of 42. The Potowatomis, an ally, shared this record with them" (8).

<sup>5</sup>Gourneau offers important information on full-bloods and the Métis: "The term 'full-blood' can be applied sociologically and does not imply that the group is made up entirely of people of pure Indian descent. It merely means that these individuals prefer and adhere to the Indian way of life instead of the Métis, or 'half-breed' way of life. . . . This 'full-blood' group definitely forms a distinct minority of the Turtle Mountain Band. The minority percentage of Band population could be as small as a fraction of one percent by today's statistics" (9).

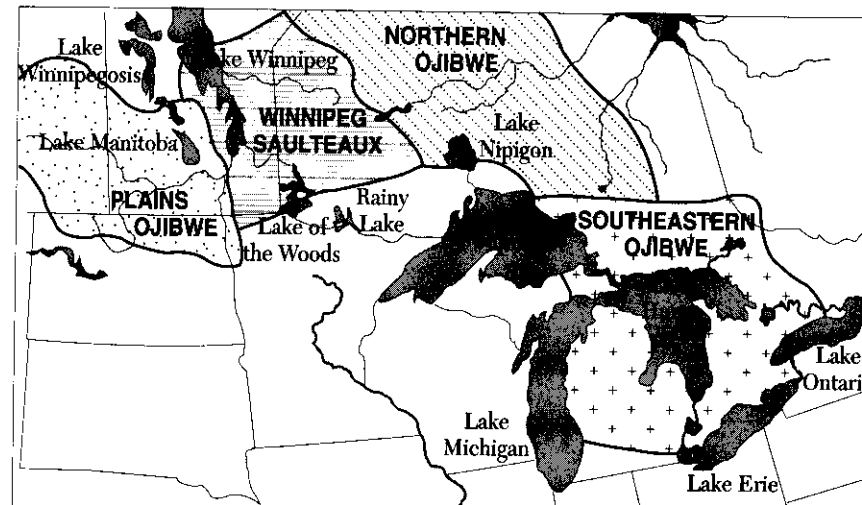
WHITEHEART BEADS



Appendix B: Maps

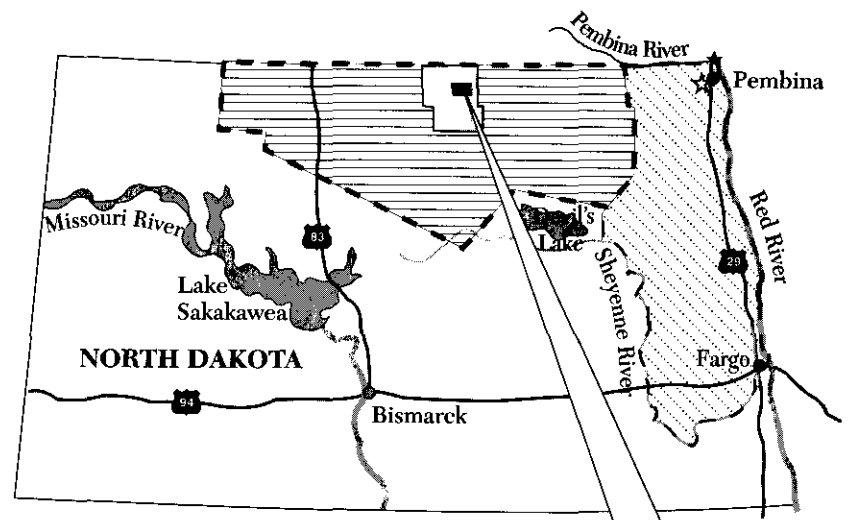
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Ojibwe Boundaries, Late 1800s

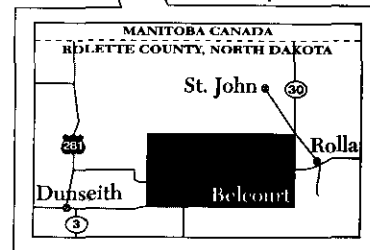


Map by Connie A. Jacobs and Lisa Snider Atchison

## The Historical and Current Turtle Mountain Homeland



Map by Lisa S. Atchison



### KEY

--- The original lands claimed by the Turtle Mountain Chippewa constituted about one-fifth of the state of North Dakota.

★ 1797: Northwest Company of Montreal establishes a trading post.

☆ 1843: Norman Kittson establishes the Pembina trading post.

□ 1863: Little Shell, leader of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, cedes eleven million acres of the Red River Valley. Red Lake and White Earth Reservations are created in Minnesota for the Chippewa. White farmers increase; buffalo herds decrease.

▨ 1882, October: Without the consent of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and without any payment made as compensation, the General Land Office opens up for Anglo settlement between nine and eleven millions of acres of land claimed by the tribe.

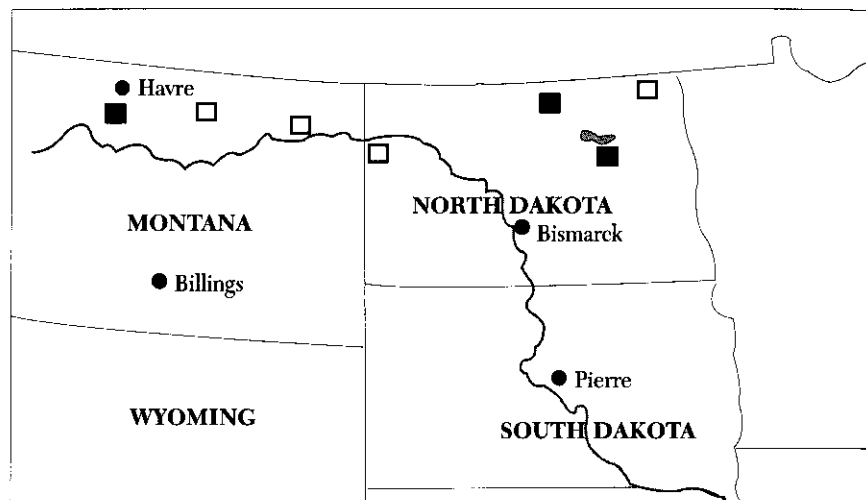
□ 1882, December: President Chester Arthur signs an executive order creating a 24-by-32-mile reservation in Rolette County, which contains excellent farmland. The reservation is intended for three hundred to four hundred full-bloods; it does not account for one thousand Métis.

■ 1884: The reservation is again reduced in size. The government opens up to European settlers twenty of the twenty-two townships of the best farmland set aside for the Turtle Mountain Chippewa in 1882. The government claims it is acting in deference to the full-bloods, who did not want their lands in severalty, and tells the Métis to take their allotment on public lands.

1904: The McCumber Agreement originally made in 1892 is finally ratified, and the tribe officially cedes the nine to ten million acres it still claims. Now known as the "ten-cent treaty," it compensated the tribe ten cents an acre.

The government allots 160-acre tracts to 326 families. Seven hundred male tribal members are forced to take off-reservation land in Rolette County near Devil's Lake, on public lands, and in Montana, and the tribe is thus effectively dispersed.

*Twentieth-Century United States Plains-Ojibwe  
Reservations and Reserves*



Map by Lisa Snider Atchison

**KEY**

- Full-blood reservation
- Métis communities
- Major cities

**Appendix C: Important Dates in the History of  
the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians**

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- 1780–82 A smallpox epidemic decimates the Ojibwe.
- 1780–90 Ojibwe from Leech Lake and Red Lake (Minnesota) and Northern Ojibwe from the Rainy River country (Minnesota) begin moving into the North Dakota area and successfully adapt to Plains life.
- 1797 The Northwest Company of Montreal builds a large trading post near Pembina (North Dakota) in the Red River Valley.
- 1800 The Ojibwe are hunting buffalo with the Cree.
- 1818 The United States-Canadian border is established.
- 1848 Father Anthony Belcourt establishes a mission at Pembina.
- 1850 The Métis population stands at around five thousand people, making them the largest group on the northern Plains. Cree becomes the lingua franca on the northern Plains.
- 1861 The Territory of North Dakota is created.
- 1863 The Plains Ojibwe surrender the Red River Valley.
- 1870 The Métis merge with the Pembina Ojibwe and the Ojibwe-Cree in the Turtle Mountain area.
- 1871 The Northern Pacific Railroad and the Pacific Railroad from the East reach the Red River Valley, accelerating the flow of settlers into the area.
- 1876 The Turtle Mountain Band petitions Congress for three thousand square miles of reservation land.
- 1880s The great buffalo herds roaming the Plains, once numbering sixty million, have been nearly exterminated by white buffalo hunters. Saint Ann's Catholic Church erected in Belcourt, where today it remains the center of most religious life for tribal members.
- 1882 President Arthur creates the first reservation for three hundred full-bloods; the land includes excellent farmland. The Métis settle on public lands next to the reserve. Little Shell, chief of the Turtle Mountain Band, posts a warning to whites not to encroach on Indian lands.
- 1884 The reservation is reduced from twenty-two townships to two, based on an erroneous assumption that only the three hundred or so full-bloods were entitled to land. The best land is returned to the public domain. The Sisters of Mercy and Father John Malo



- open a school; the children enrolled are Métis, not Ojibwe. The sending of children from the reservation to boarding schools begins.
- 1886-87 On the reservation 150 people starve to death during a harsh winter.
- 1887 The Dawes, or General Allotment, Act allows reservation lands to be parceled into individual allotments.
- 1890 Little Shell and his group of Ojibwe-Métis move to Montana seeking a reservation area where they could live a traditional lifestyle.
- 1891 The band petitions the secretary of the interior, asking that 446,670 acres be removed from adjoining public lands and annexed to the reservation.
- 1892 The McCumber Agreement restores nine million acres to the public domain without the consent of the tribe, who are paid \$1 million, earning the agreement the name the "ten-cent treaty." The United States government now owns all the Plains-Ojibwe land in North Dakota with the exception of two townships that are unsuitable for dry farming. This land is divided into allotments, and those not receiving land are allowed to settle on available public lands to which they believed they had legal title and consequently did not file for titles. Many mixed-bloods are dropped unfairly from tribal rolls.
- 1893-96 A national depression occurs.
- 1895 Game, fish, and fur-bearing animals are nearly depleted on the overcrowded reservation. Many full-bloods move off the reservation and squat on public lands near Dunseith. Believing that they already legally own the land, many full-bloods do not apply for their rightful titles.
- 1890-1910 Smallpox and tuberculosis epidemics strike the Turtle Mountain Reservation.
- 1900 Little Shell dies; he has been the leading spokesman against the McCumber Agreement. Kakenowash succeeds him as tribal leader.
- 1904 The "ten-cent treaty" is ratified by Congress. The tribe continues to disperse as land is allotted to its members in surrounding areas in North Dakota and in Montana.
- 1911 Tribal members who were issued off-reservation allotment land still have not received trust patents for their land. When they do, most of the mixed-bloods sell them within a year.
- 1920 Nearly ninety percent of tribal members receiving a patent have lost their land, increasing their government dependence.

- 1930 Many tribal businesses are operating in Belcourt.
- 1932 An eight-person tribal council is established.
- 1941 The government purchases thirty-three thousand acres for landless tribal members.
- 1950 The termination policy is enacted by the government, which no longer feels obligated to help support reservation tribes.
- 1952 The Indian Relocation Act seeks to move Indians into the cities.
- 1960s-70s The Vietnam War is waged; the Civil Rights Act is passed.
- 1966 The American Indian Movement (AIM) is formed by Dennis Banks, a mixed-blood Ojibwe from the Leech Lake Reservation, and Clyde Bellecourt, a mixed-blood Lakota from the Pine Ridge Reservation. They seek to force the government to recognize Indian rights.
- 1971 Turtle Mountain Community College opens.
- 1979 The Indian Claims Commission awards \$52,527,338 to the tribe in recognition of the unfairness of the McCumber Agreement.
- 1980s The tribe establishes a shopping mall, a heritage center, a buffalo park, and a bingo palace.
- 1982 The government establishes "Chippewayan Authentics" to mass-produce native crafts. The venture fails because there is no market for the machine-made goods.
- 1988 President Ronald Reagan signs legislation establishing a commission to regulate gambling on reservation lands. The United States Court of Claims, in accordance with P.L. 97-403, issues the first partial payment to tribal members as compensation for the "ten-cent treaty." "This award was made from the 1905 value of a large aboriginal tract of over eight million acres of land in North Central North Dakota" (*BIA Bulletin*, Turtle Mountain Agency).
- 1994 The United States Court of Claims, in accordance with P.L. 97-403, issues the final partial payment of \$1,232.97 for each tribal member.
- 2000 There are 28,703 tribal members on the roll, with 15,000 of them living on or near the reservation.