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A Gathering of Rivers

Lucy Eldersveld Murphy

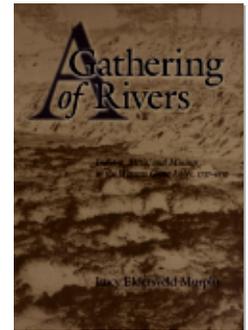
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Indian Economic Development, Settlers, and the Erosion of Accommodation

In 1831 Hūwanīkga, the Little Elk, told his life's story to his friend John Harris Kinzie, who wrote it down. Born in 1774 into the influential Winnebago Carrymaunee family, Hūwanīkga's background was a mixture of ethnicities: his maternal grandfather had been a Pawnee captive who married a Winnebago woman, and his father was "a descendent of the Sac tribe." One of ten children, he was raised at Lake Winnebago, his birthplace.

Hūwanīkga was careful to tell Kinzie about each of his four wives. In about 1790, when he was sixteen winters old, Hūwanīkga "became his own master and commenced hunting for a family" in order to marry Cahaskawīga, White Buckskin. "After proving himself a considerable hunter, he obtained the object of his heart," but the match was not a good one—the couple agreed to separate after less than a year.

About a month later, however, Hūwanīkga married two wives, Nāṅagega and Hocāṭ'īwiga, Mild Distant Thunder. The latter died in 1826, but the former had left him in 1822 after thirty-one years of marriage and eight children. In 1829 when he was about fifty-five years old, he married the eighteen-year-old Rogūinega, The Wanted One, with whom he had one child. All of his wives were Winnebago.

In addition to his family, Hūwanīkga told Kinzie about his trip to Washington DC with a delegation of Winnebago leaders in 1828 and about his war record. "His reputation as a warrior has been limited, not having frequent opportunities to display his courage in that way," Kinzie wrote, mentioning a disappointing expedition against an Ojibwe village. As an afterthought, Kinzie concluded by mentioning offhandedly that he had "been at the battles of Tippecanoe, Mau-mee[,] Macinac and Prairie du Chien."¹

In accordance with the Treaty of 1829, Hūwanįkga had in 1831 recently moved the village he led from Grand Detour on the Rock River to the Baraboo River, a tributary north of the Wisconsin.²

Hūwanįkga's narrative illustrates a number of themes that helped define the experiences of Indians in the Fox-Wisconsin region during the century before he and Kinzie sat down together. First, as the topics Hūwanįkga selected for his personal narrative suggest, family, travels, hunting, and war honors continued to be important to Native men in the region. However, intertribal battles had decreased in frequency since the mid-eighteenth century, and a civil leader such as the Little Elk—who was an official speaker, tribal diplomat, and village leader—could be effective without a strong military background. His casual mention of participation in imperial wars implies that they seemed to him categorically different than intertribal warfare. His diplomatic visit to Washington DC, with which he was “very much delighted,” seemed much more important.³

Second, Little Elk's family background was a mixture of ethnicities in a region that had long been multiethnic and where people used intermarriage as a means of assimilating newcomers and facilitating communication and accommodation. His parents' history also demonstrates for the late eighteenth century the groom service and matrilineal tribal identity consistent with a high status for women.

Third, as Hūwanįkga's discussion of his wives makes clear, Native women continued to receive a substantial amount of respect, on the whole, during the early nineteenth century. One reason for this was the continued importance of women's production for both subsistence and, increasingly, the market. Although the Fox-Wisconsin Indians maintained traditional rhythms and gender roles, these were adapted to new economic pursuits. Women's continued ability to divorce, an option Nāņagega exercised, reflects the autonomy women maintained as their economy and society evolved in response to new realities such as immigration, increased access to markets, and contested resources.

Finally, changes in residential location reflect the Indians' adaptations during the previous century. Hūwanįkga had been born and raised at the Winnebago Rapids at Lake Winnebago; by 1822 he was living on the Wisconsin River probably in or near the mining region to the southwest. After the lead rush began, however, he moved to Grand Detour on the Rock River until his treaty-forced removal to the Baraboo about 1831.⁴ During Hūwanįkga's lifetime, there had been a shift in Indian village locations, with many Winnebagos, Sauks, and Mesquakies moving south and west from their mid-eighteenth-century locations, into the

lead region and along the Mississippi, Wisconsin, or Rock Rivers (or other tributaries of the Mississippi).⁵

Although most of these shifts took the people out of the wild rice area of the Fox River, the Indians migrated to regions still within a climate warm enough for their agriculture and with deciduous forests of maple and basswood, resources the people needed for sugar and mat production.⁶ Geographer Jeanne Kay's study of the region found that during this period the size of Winnebago villages tended to decrease while their number increased. This change she attributes to a general shift away from large communally hunted game to small fur-bearing animals best hunted by individuals or small groups, which were most successful if they spread out.⁷ Proximity to the lead mines was probably an issue: Between the 1780s and mid-1820s, Sauk, Mesquakie, and Winnebago mineral producers wanted to be closer to their work. During the lead rush, though, some Indians sought to avoid conflict with whites and voluntarily moved to the sidelines while others positioned themselves to police the Anglo miners better or to service travelers with businesses such as ferries.

Little Elk's Rock River village was forced to relocate. This was ostensibly because some Winnebagos had protested personal assaults and illegal invasions of their lead lands during the Winnebago Revolt of 1827, but the actual purpose was to open up the region to Anglo farmers and lead miners who wanted access to the same resources the Indians had successfully developed during the previous century. During the late 1820s and 1830s, U.S. authorities ordered many other Native Americans to leave their homes in this part of the Midwest, following patterns of removal established several decades earlier in states to the east.

From the 1780s through the mid-1820s Native American economies of the Fox-Wisconsin region continued to be varied, based on seasonal migrations, and oriented toward both domestic and market production. While the Indians intensified and commercialized their lead mining operations, they experienced a number of other economic changes as well. They mined lead as one part of an overall pattern of increased market production while they also provided many more services to the large numbers of outsiders coming into or through their country. This diversification allowed Natives to maintain their autonomy into the mid-1820s. In scattered locations, relationships with Anglos reflected accommodations of various types, but ultimately multiracial alternatives to removal lost out.

INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Fox-Wisconsin region Indians maintained their seasonal economies and migration patterns through 1832, although seasonal activities were affected by access to Euro-American technology. They continued to grow corn, beans, squash, and melons in the summer villages, and some groups apparently added Irish potatoes to their gardens.⁸ In the winter, meat and gathered foods supplemented the small amount of dried grains and vegetables they could bring along. By the early nineteenth century many Indians owned horses that could carry additional baggage to the wintering camps besides what would fit in the family canoes.⁹ As always, they moved to their sugar camps in the early spring to make maple sugar, but by the 1790s the scale of sugar production had increased significantly thanks to the availability of kettles that made boiling sap easier. After the sugar harvest, the Indians returned to their villages to plant, and once the crops were well established, they split up into hunting, gathering, and mining parties for a few weeks in midsummer and returned as the crop harvest approached. As lead mining intensified, some Mesquakies and Winnebagos spent extra time in the Fever River and Mines of Spain regions at their diggings. Sauks seem to have been somewhat less involved in intensive mining than these other tribes.

AUTONOMY VS. DEPENDENCY

To evaluate the Indians' economic self-sufficiency one must examine their food, clothing, and shelter for the early nineteenth century. Shelter was the most unchanged: their homes continued to be built with mats and saplings in the winter and, for some, of logs and bark in the summers—no doubt Euro-American axes were helpful in cutting the wood and bark.

In their fall credits, in items sold by traders who followed them to their wintering places, and in year-round expenditures, Indian purchases continued to be primarily clothing, hunting equipment, and nonessential items for adornment (similar to the patterns Dean Anderson had noted for the pre-1760 period in the Midwest).¹⁰ This similarity is revealed in a number of account records, both individual Indians' accounts and registers of goods traders took with them.¹¹

Indians in the nineteenth century did buy some food from whites—probably more than they had a half-century earlier—and they were often given food by Indian agents and army officers. For example, John Dixon sold corn, wheat, flour, rye, salt, and potatoes to Indians in 1830 and 1831; the Dousman winter accounts record Indians buying sugar, raisins, and rice.¹² According to a history of early Wisconsin region taverns,

Table 3. John Dixon's Account Book: Indian Accounts, 1830–31
Purchases made by thirty-seven Winnebagos and Potawatomis, April
1830–January 1832

Number of Items or Purchases			
ADORNMENT	COOKING	GROOMING	TOBACCO USE
arm bands: 1	& EATING	combs: 13	"pipes": 2
beads: 30	UTENSILS		tobacco: 20
bell(s): 5	basin: 6	HUNTING	
brooches: 1	firesteel: 4	flints: 18	WOODWORKING
feathers: 3	frying pan: 1	gun: 1	ax: 2
handkerchiefs: 17	kettle: 5	powder: 46	hatchet: 1
looking glasses: 12	knives: 27	shot: 10	dowel: 1
paint: 10		spear: 4	"steel on ax": 3
"rings": 3	DRINKING	traps: 97	
yarn: 1	cups: 2		OTHER
		MAINTENANCE	bridle: 1
AMUSEMENTS	FISHING	brass nails: 11	"socket for ball": 1
jaw harps: 5	fish gig: 1		
		SERVICE	
CLOTHING	FOOD	fixing gun: 3	
binding:	corn: 21	mending ax: 2	
blanket: 46	flour: 3	mending trap: 3	
"britch cloak": 1	potatoes: 2	upsetting ax: 1	
buckskin: 5	rye: 1		
cloth for coat: 2	salt: 1		
leggings, pair: 3	wheat: 1		
needles: 4			
shirts: 91			
strouds: 21			

Source: John Dixon Account Book, 29 April 1830–January 1832, George C. Dixon Collection, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, microfilm.

"one year when the whites raised an excellent crop of corn, tribesmen came numerously in the fall to swap muskrat hides for maize."¹³ Food typically played an important role in the region's hospitality, so government officials gave provisions to local Indians when the latter visited. For instance, the Indian agent at Rock Island, Thomas Forsyth, issued 469 rations of meat, 1,134 rations of flour, and 47 quarts of salt during one year in addition to 1,984 servings (62 gallons) of whiskey, but he had about 6,400 Indians for whom he was responsible.¹⁴ Although Natives sometimes varied their diets with wheat flour or pork, Indian women continued to tend their basic crops of maize, beans, squash, and melons. Wild game commonly filled their kettles, and those who had access to the area around Green Bay—or to people who did—ate wild rice.

Although in precontact times the Indians had made their garments

out of leather and furs, traders' accounts, portraits, and contemporaries' descriptions reveal that by the 1820s most Indians of the Fox-Wisconsin region wore Euro-American textiles and even ready-made clothing. Blankets, shirts, and cotton and woolen cloth for making leggings and dresses were among the most frequently purchased trade goods. Portraits, which usually illustrate subjects wearing their favorite and fanciest clothes, suggest that by the 1820s Native women universally preferred to wear cotton blouses, calf-length skirts or dresses, red or blue leggings, and a shawl or blanket for an outer garment. In the summer men wore little clothing besides breechclouts when hunting or celebrating, according to artists such as George Catlin and James Otto Lewis. With the exception of some Sauks and Mesquakies, most men liked ready-made cotton or linen shirts and leggings sewn out of wool strouding. They too wore blankets in winter.¹⁵ Because women were in charge of making garments, Dean Anderson interprets these substantial expenditures on clothing to mean that "women probably had considerable input into the decision about the types of goods to be obtained in trade."¹⁶ Furthermore, women could be independent consumers. Wives often had accounts separate from their Indian husbands in the early-nineteenth-century ledgers.

Very elite men such as Hujopga, Four Legs, of the Winnebagos might own a wool coat.¹⁷ Black Hawk and Wabokieshiek had their portraits painted in leather shirts; one account suggested that Black Hawk never wore "any part of a white man's garb" before the Black Hawk War, perhaps symbolizing his nativist resistance to removal.¹⁸ Everyone in the region—Indians, Creoles, and even many Anglos—wore moccasins.

Although women continued to sew and decorate leggings, skirts, and dresses, they now had many fewer shirts to sew and little tanning to do for garments. Time that women of earlier generations would have put into tanning and sewing could be used on other activities, including mining, tanning pelts for trade, raising crops, and making other items to sell. The portraits with leather garments reveal, however, that Indian women did maintain the *skills* needed to make clothes from pelts.

Fewer hides were needed for garments, which meant more could go to traders if hunters killed the same number of mammals. Some species' populations declined in the Fox-Wisconsin region, however, particularly the ungulates—deer, bison, and elk—whose larger hides had been good for everyday clothing.¹⁹

The vulnerable parts of the Indians' subsistence system were in the areas of processing and resources. In terms of processing, Indians retained hunting skill but relied on traders for gunpowder. When furs were the region's only major commercial commodity that could be

traded for clothing, tools, and weapons, much of the Indians' purchasing power depended on game availability and the men's ability to shoot or trap fur bearers. A decline in the quantity of pelts collected, in other words, caused a decline in the amount of clothing the Indians could make or buy.

Another problem was that by the early nineteenth century firearms had become nearly essential to the region's hunters. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Natives had necessarily adopted guns for self-defense against enemies who had firearms and had found the weapons an improvement for hunting over bows and arrows. Thomas Forsyth reported that the Sauks were better armed than the Mesquakies; in 1818, of one thousand Sauk warriors, six hundred had good rifles and four hundred owned "indifferent rifles and shot guns and some few with bows and arrows" while only one-quarter to one-third of four hundred Mesquakie warriors could be considered "well-armed."²⁰ He believed that by 1831 Indians were dependent on merchants: "if the traders do not supply their necessary wants, and enable them to support themselves, they would literally starve."²¹

Forsyth's assessment is an exaggeration—Native men maintained knowledge of the use of bows and arrows and taught these skills to their sons as late as the 1820s.²² But there is no doubt that they preferred to use firearms and were much more successful with them. This preference made their subsistence system vulnerable, particularly since hunting with firearms required not only the one-time purchase and maintenance of a gun but also access to a ready source of ammunition. There was little the Indians could do in the way of producing gunpowder, but they did have local sources of lead for shot and bullets.

In the late eighteenth century, when the Indians were actively involved with the fur trade and the French and Indian War and the American Revolution disrupted this economic system, the Natives' vulnerability no doubt became quite clear to them. It should not surprise us that they began to diversify their economies just about the time that Julien Dubuque settled at the Mines of Spain. Was this a consciously made policy change or a gradual adaptation? The answer is hard to know, but one author suggests that the Mesquakies may have recruited Dubuque "to organize their lead trade."²³

By increasing lead production beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Indians could make their own ammunition and become less dependent on pelt availability for trade items with which to buy powder and clothing. They traded lead to other Indians, who paid for it with furs or trade goods.²⁴ Euro-Americans needed lead too and would trade clothing, powder, rifles, and other items for it. Existing traders accepted

lead, but more importantly other merchants came into the area to trade for it as well as furs; these men were affiliated with merchants like the Chouteaus of St. Louis.

Before the rise of St. Louis in the late eighteenth century, traders in the Fox-Wisconsin region had been universally tied to Michilimackinac companies and franchises of Montreal concerns, making the central and western section of the region especially remote and hard to reach. Once traders were linked to St. Louis, however, they could take advantage of the Mississippi River as an avenue, and the western part of this area gained alternative trade outlets. Julien Dubuque was the first major trader who shipped to both St. Louis and Mackinac. This connection to St. Louis is certainly another reason the Indians increasingly established their villages in the western section of the Fox-Wisconsin region from the late eighteenth century into the early 1830s.

WOMEN'S ROLES

In addition to lead mining, women intensified other areas of production. During the second half of the eighteenth century, Winnebago, Sauk, and Mesquakie women not only produced food, clothing, mats, and other craft items for their own families and friends but also for exchange with mixed-race trade centers such as Prairie du Chien and other markets beyond the region. In return they acquired goods such as blankets, other textiles, kettles, knives, and so forth. During the early nineteenth century many of these women came to the homes of white settlers and to the Mississippi rapids when keelboats passed to trade craft items, feathers, and food.²⁵

In 1820 Morrell Marston, a U.S. Army officer stationed at Fort Armstrong near Rock Island, reported that the Sauk and Mesquakie women living in villages near the east bank of the Mississippi cultivated three hundred acres of land. "They usually raise from seven to eight thousand bushels of corn, besides beans, pumpkins, mellons, &c. &c. About one thousand bushels of the corn they annually sell to traders & others."²⁶ The women of these villages, with an estimated local population of about two thousand, also traded 3,000 pounds of feathers and 1,000 pounds of beeswax.²⁷ U.S. factors in the Fox-Wisconsin region handled only a small percentage of the area's trade. However, in 1819 they received nearly 2,000 pounds of maple sugar, 980 pounds of feathers, 680 pounds of tallow, 343 pounds of beeswax, and 216 mats in addition to 16,705 pelts.²⁸

Marston was particularly impressed with the mats. "The women usually make about three hundred floor mats every summer; these mats are

as handsome & as durable as those made abroad. The twine which connects the rushes together is made either of bass wood bark after being boiled and hammered or the bark of the nettle; the women twist or spin it by rolling it on the leg with the hand.”²⁹ Women manufactured such mats not only for flooring but also as the external coverings for their wigwams. These mats, which could be up to six feet long, were apparently the specialty of elderly women.³⁰

One trader noted the high quality of the crafts, writing that the Winnebago women “in general are very industrious . . . they also make handsome mats, and garnish mocasins, shot pouches &c with porcupine quills, with great neatness and ingenuity.”³¹ Juliette Kinzie, wife of the Indian agent at Portage, Wisconsin, recalled that in 1830 the Indians traded not only furs but “maple-sugar in abundance, considerable quantities of both [fresh and dried, parboiled] Indian corn . . . , beans and the *folles avoines*, or wild-rice, while [they] added to their quota of merchandize a contribution in the form of moccasins, hunting pouches, moccasins, or little boxes of birch-bark embroidered with porcupine quills and filled with maple-sugar, mats of a neat and durable fabric, and toy-models of Indian cradles, snow shoes, canoes, &c., &c.”³²

Sugar making remained an important economic activity for Indian women. By the early nineteenth century, when the Native population of this region was around twelve thousand, maple sugar was a commodity of major importance.³³ The Indians of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin sold seventy thousand pounds of it in 1816 not counting what they made for their own consumption; Indian women around Green Bay alone produced twenty-five thousand pounds.³⁴ In 1830 a Green Bay official reported that fifty thousand pounds of maple sugar was consumed locally each year while one hundred thousand pounds was exported annually from the area, although it is unclear how much was produced by Indians and how much by Creoles.³⁵ The amount of surplus being produced, particularly of food and other necessities, argues in favor of economic autonomy and against dependency.

MEN'S ROLES

While Indian women adapted traditional production methods to lead mining and intensified production of certain goods for the market, Indian men's roles also changed from the late eighteenth century through the Black Hawk War. Of course Indian men continued to hunt and trap game to feed their families, and they continued to trade furs to a greater or lesser extent. Fur trade participation varied greatly from year to year depending on wildlife availability, the threat of violence, and available

alternative economic pursuits. However, by 1832 the fur trade was in decline.³⁶ Scholar Jeanne Kay has argued that although Indians overhunted bison, elk, beaver, and deer east of the Mississippi, they did not begin to deplete muskrats or martens, the “most economically important species.”³⁷ Rather, the decline in pelt production may have resulted in part from decisions the Indians themselves made to hunt and trap less and to pursue alternative activities.³⁸

The quest for furs was only part of Indian men’s hunting objectives. Feeding their families was more important to them. While they ate red meat, fowl—particularly wild ducks, geese, and turkeys—served this purpose just as well. Furthermore, Indians could sell feathers almost as easily as furs. Whites bought large quantities of feathers for use in featherbeds, which Euro-Americans valued highly for their warmth and softness. One trader shipped fifty-five bags of feathers worth two hundred dollars to St. Louis with his furs in 1830.³⁹ Another, Julien Dubuque, had shortly before his death taken in seven barrels of feathers weighing a total of 100 pounds in exchange for flour and owned 133 pounds of featherbeds, his estate inventory reveals.⁴⁰ Featherbeds had little attraction for Indians, however, since their weight and bulk made them impractical for people who migrated seasonally.

Indian men also hunted for fowl and meat to sell and could be employed in different capacities. Sometimes hunters or their wives sold game to whites they knew. For example, Indians knew that a particular tavern keeper in Delafield, Wisconsin, was always ready to buy venison, wildfowl, fish, or berries.⁴¹ George Davenport, a Rock Island trader, had both Indian and white customers by 1830 and kept their accounts in separate sections of his journals. He sold “ducks & geese,” “wild fowl,” turkeys, and venison to whites, food that had probably been caught by Indians.⁴² In the early nineteenth century “it was not an uncommon thing to see a Fox Indian arrive at Prairie du Chien with a hand sled, loaded with twenty or thirty wild turkies for sale.”⁴³ Many traders generally depended on Indians for their own meat and other provisions, especially at locations remote from Creole communities.

On other occasions Indians contracted to hunt for whites. Creole families sometimes kept Indian retainers to provide meat for their families. Fort commanders might contract with a party of Indians to provision their troops when Anglo contractors failed to come through with promised beef and pork.⁴⁴ White travelers might also ask a hunter to get them some dinner, as when Juliette and John Kinzie with several companions became lost in a storm on a winter journey and were rescued by a family of Potawatomis. The Indian “master of the lodge” offered

to “shoot some ducks for our dinner and supper,” Juliette recalled, for which John later paid him.⁴⁵

For a few years, however, some Indians were reluctant to sell fowl or flesh to whites. Augustin Grignon recalled a time during the early years of the nineteenth century when followers of Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh were influenced by their leaders’ teachings about meat. The Prophet preached that “they should furnish no meat to the whites; but if they should, to be certain that the meat was separated from the bones, and the bones unbroken to be buried at the roots of some tree.” While Menominees might be persuaded to sell boned meat, Grignon recalled, “the Winnebagoes pretty generally . . . refused to furnish the whites any meat.” For this reason, one of the Winnebagos’ traders nearly starved during the winter of 1810–11 “and had some of the time to cook and eat hides.” Grignon himself managed to get food that winter only by refusing to sell any ammunition to the Indians unless they supplied him with meat.⁴⁶

Hunting took a variety of forms, some related to the fur trade, but by no means all of it. Reduced pelt production by the 1830s might indicate an absolute decline in hunting or a shift toward fowl hunting, though most likely both. Jeanne Kay suggests that Indians spent less time and effort on pelt production for the fur trade by the 1830s in part because they chose to participate in alternative commercial activities such as lead and sugar production and fishing.⁴⁷ Menominees and others sold fish around Green Bay but not farther west.⁴⁸ Although lead and sugar production were women’s activities, men did help out in support roles.

Men’s efforts also went into several other activities. Elites, in particular, continued to spend much time in diplomacy with whites and other Indians. For example, when Black Hawk’s band of Sauks refused to move west of the Mississippi with the other Sauks and threatened to go to war against the Sioux in 1829, Agent Forsyth reported that Keokuk had been assigned to try to keep peace. Keokuk told Forsyth “that the head chiefs who are now at Ihowai [Iowa] River directed him to remain at Rocky River to keep things in order if possible,” but Forsyth thought that “Keocuck appears to be much dejected from his chiefs compelling him to stay at Rocky River, as part of his large family is already at Ihowai River.”⁴⁹ Keokuk later remarked that his Rock River duties had cost him his summer hunt.⁵⁰ Other politicians and diplomats likely gave up their summer hunts to deal with local crises as well.

During the lead rush years Native men in the mining region spent substantial amounts of their energies policing their lands, trying to keep Anglos out and to enforce control. Like diplomacy, this community

security work required time and energy, making it difficult for the men to leave their villages for any length of time to go hunting.

During the eighteenth century Indian men had served both their own communities and the French and British colonial authorities as soldiers. They, their sons, and grandsons continued to perform these services for Great Britain and/or the United States through 1832, receiving in return intangible rewards such as good will and political alliances, in addition to food, clothing, and weapons. For example, when the British recruited Black Hawk to lead Indian soldiers in the War of 1812, he and his warriors were given “arms and ammunition, tomahawks, knives, and clothing.”⁵¹ These Sauks sided with the British at least in part because of more favorable trading policies.⁵² Hųwanįkga’s memoir suggests that such military excursions on behalf of Euro-Americans were considered different and perhaps less important in an Indian man’s life than Indian-initiated, intertribal battles.

Indian life in the Midwest involved a substantial amount of traveling, and as expert travelers Indian men were often hired by Creoles and Anglos. Before regular mail service was established, Indian men delivered letters and messages to military and trading posts and were paid in clothing and food. A Menominee chief named Tomah delivered a letter from Robert Dickson at Sandwich to John Lawe at Green Bay in 1813; the letter instructed Lawe to “cloathe his [Tomah’s] Wife & Children” and give him flour in return.⁵³ George Davenport recorded that in 1830 he “Paid Wabono in goods for a trip to St. Louis \$20.”⁵⁴ He also paid a Sauk four dollars in cash for delivering a horse.⁵⁵

Euro-Americans unfamiliar with the region needed guides, so they hired Indian or Creole men. One such instance took place in January 1812 when George Hunt fled a Winnebago attack on his trading post near the old Mines of Spain, paying a young Sauk man who guided him and his interpreter two hundred fifty miles overland to Fort Madison. The guide, Ka-Sin-Wa, received the promised horse for his efforts, in addition he received presents of clothing, jewelry, pork, and flour at the end of the journey.⁵⁶ Other Indian guides, such as A-Wish-To-Youn, lived in Green Bay.⁵⁷ Similarly, two Indian boys guided Henry Merrell and Hamilton Arndt just west of Green Bay in the early 1830s.⁵⁸ A number of Indians sometimes worked assisting with portages at the rapids of Grand Kakalin not far up the Fox River from Green Bay.⁵⁹

During the mid-1820s some Indians maintained at least one ferry on the Rock River where it intersected with one of the main roads leading into the lead mining region. A lead rusher of 1826 recorded, “There was . . . a large Indian village on each side of the river . . . and we had the good fortune to hire the Indians to ferry our cart over and the oxen

swam over.”⁶⁰ Another traveler described the process: “On arriving at the place of crossing the wagons were unloaded and the loads carried over in canoes by the Indians. The wagon was then driven with the side to the stream and two wheels lifted into a canoe, then shoved a little out into the river; another canoe received the other two wheels, when the double boat was paddled or poled to the other side. The horses were taken by the bridle and made to swim by the side of the canoe, while the cattle swam loose.”⁶¹ These were apparently Winnebagos or the people of the mixed Winnebago-Sauk community headed by the Prophet, Wabokieshiek. In 1828 he denied that “the Winnebagoes on Rocky River were imposing on travelers whom the[y] ferried across that river,” telling Thomas Forsyth that “the white people were not overcharged for ferrying them, their cattle and waggons across.” In fact, Wabokieshiek told of an instance in which the Indians of his village answered a call for help from some whites having trouble herding their cattle across the Rock River; the whites offered the Indians ten dollars for their assistance.⁶²

Indian men also returned and ransomed escaped African American slaves and Indian and white war captives. In 1830, after some stalling which may have indicated ambivalence, Sauk chiefs returned “Colonel Allens Negros,” who had somehow come to be living in a Sauk community, and received thirty dollars as a reward.⁶³ In the same year an agent reported that two Sauks had Yankton slaves who had been taken captive the previous spring, urging Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark “to reclaim these poor unfortunate women so as to have them at St. Louis when the Yanktons attend your summons to accede to the treaty” of 1830. One of the two women had been “so cruelly treated” by her first master “and drove so hard that her infant died on her back (starved),” but she had been purchased by a kinder Sauk man who paid four horses worth two hundred sixty dollars for her; and received a receipt for the purchase made out by the interpreter. The agent assumed the receipt was “for the purpose of demanding a large ransom from the whites.”⁶⁴

These occasional jobs could seldom be anticipated, but they did provide Indian men with cash or, more frequently, goods that they would otherwise have purchased on credit. The work took time and effort that might have been devoted to hunting or other activities and may be one reason for the decline in pelt production. Most of these activities, like hunting, tended to take men away from home, reinforcing women’s independence.

Indians sold their products and services to individual Indian, Anglo, and Creole customers. They sold lead to other Indians and certainly

exchanged various products with neighbors and Native acquaintances who lived at a distance. It is extremely difficult to know much about most Indian-to-Indian trade, although we do know that Indians increasingly sold goods and services to settlers, soldiers, and travelers. In addition, the historical record suggests that traders continued to be important customers.

GENDER RELATIONS

There is substantial evidence that Indian women maintained their relatively equal status and autonomy within their own communities throughout this period. They retained the right to divorce their husbands—Nanagega, for example, was free to divorce Hūwanīkga in 1822. Women whose relatives had been slain could initiate revenge attacks against the killers, their kin, or their tribesmen.⁶⁵ They could not be coerced by tribal leaders, as when a Sauk woman absolutely refused to give up a captive Sioux child she had adopted despite the demands of U.S. officials and the urgent solicitations of Indian leaders, who would not presume to use force.⁶⁶ Women as well as men could gain membership in the Sauk Medicine Society, a leadership and religious organization.⁶⁷

Women, in fact, played important leadership roles in their communities. After Red Bird was imprisoned as a result of the Winnebago Revolt of 1827, his wife became head of the Prairie La Crosse band. A U.S. agent described her as “a woman of no ordinary character, and standing. Sensible, and acute, she knows how to improve the advantages devolving upon her, as the wife of a beloved leader. And she is now perhaps considered at the head of the band to which he lately belonged.”⁶⁸ Similarly, the Mesquakie wife of Winnebago chief Hūjopga, Four Legs, “had great influence not only with him but with the [Winnebago] nation at large.” Because she spoke Ojibwe, the region’s lingua franca that differed so much from Winnebago, she was able to serve as an interpreter as well as advisor. She was “in the habit of accompanying her husband, and assisting him by her counsels upon all occasions.”⁶⁹

Sauk women were among the strongest resisters to removal, and Black Hawk’s leadership owed a great deal to this female support. One of the main issues to the women was the difficulty of breaking the sod and making new fields in the location of their proposed trans-Mississippi community. The women of Saukenuk had heard from those already there about hard farming and the poor yields.⁷⁰ The fields they had farmed for almost a century were fertile and much easier to work, which was precisely why the settlers wanted them.

Women maintained influence and autonomy in Fox-Wisconsin Na-

tive societies in part because of Indians' traditional abhorrence of coercion. Native women's increased commercial production and continued production for subsistence, in addition to their control of resources and production processes, no doubt were other major reasons for their favorable position within the communities.

Market participation had not subordinated women villagers within their own communities in the Fox-Wisconsin region. The Sauk, Mesquakie, and Winnebago people there had adapted traditional gender roles in ways that maintained gender balance for those who remained within the village economy. This was probably supported by the frequent absences of men in their roles of warriors, guides, messengers, interpreters, hunters, and diplomats as they increasingly provided such services to outsiders. The rich natural environment provided both a variety of resources and a climate warm enough for agricultural production to meet their own needs as well as producing marketable surpluses. Unlike the situation in other regions, few missionaries or other agents of "civilization" mounted concerted efforts to force gender role changes; those few who tried met with resistance. As elsewhere, the Sauk, Mesquakie, and Winnebago men hunted for furs that women processed for trade, but by the 1830s the fur trade was only one part of a diverse economy in which Indian women were active producers.

THE INFLUENCE OF TRADERS

An increasing number of traders arrived in the region after the War of 1812. John Jacob Astor formed the American Fur Company shortly before the war, and afterward the company's agents tried unsuccessfully to establish a monopoly in the Midwest.⁷¹ One of them, George Davenport, wrote to his partner Russell Farnham in November 1826, "if we can only secure the trade to our Selves for two three years we will make the winibagos pay well for the goods we know [i.e., "now"] give them at so low a price."⁷² The U.S. factory system had established government traders at Prairie du Chien, Green Bay, and an outpost near the old Mines of Spain (see chapter 4), but they were unpopular with the Indians and unsuccessful competitors against private traders. Despite the best efforts of American Fur Company agents like Davenport, however, the number of traders in the region increased dramatically after the War of 1812, usually to the advantage of the Indians.

Competition kept traders like Davenport from achieving monopolies that would allow them to charge extremely high prices, but some businessmen occasionally used liquor to lure customers. The U.S. government had regulations prohibiting sales of alcohol to Indians, rules that

were difficult to enforce. Prior to the 1820s, most drinking seems to have been done during festive occasions or under the supervision of agents such as Forsyth. But by the time the lead rush was in full swing in the mid-1820s, there were reports that alcoholism was taking a toll on some of the region's Indians. In 1824 Forsyth recorded that the Mesquakies were suffering the most, as they were "generally so addicted to spirituous liquor, that very many of them at any time will sell their canoes, guns or any provisions they may have . . . for a little whisky."⁷³ The Mesquakies had been the earliest Natives displaced by the lead rush, and it was in the lead region where many whites sold liquor. In 1824, Indian agents complained that whites in the mining region were selling whiskey, but that it was impossible to prosecute them since no one would testify against the vendors; in any case, there were "no magistrates at the mines." The local agent told three Indians "to take back their horses that they had sold for whisky," probably hoping this would dissuade liquor sellers in the future.⁷⁴ It was in the lead region during the early years of the lead rush that the only report of Indian prostitution occurred: Moses Meeker recorded that the Indians "offer[ed] lewd women to the whites for whiskey" in addition to prospecting in exchange for bottles of liquor.⁷⁵

The Sauks seem to have been the least affected by alcohol-related problems; Sauk leaders such as Black Hawk—who was known to break open a barrel and pour out its contents onto the ground to enforce temperance around Saukenuk—were more successful in keeping it away from their communities.⁷⁶

To Kunuga Decorah, who was among the most prominent of the Winnebago chiefs, the problem of alcohol was gendered and generational. He emphasized the importance of keeping the elders at home rather than on diplomatic errands: "when the women are making corn—the young-men & warriors will be idle—or roaming over the plains—and we fear when *good chiefs* are away, they will go amongst the whites—get whiskey, and when drunk, *murder will come*."⁷⁷ Kunuga Decorah attributed the Red Bird party's attack during the Winnebago Revolt to drunkenness, although evidence suggests that an attack had been planned for some time.⁷⁸ Probably a large number of Indians went on the occasional binge and woke up sorry, and a smaller number were actually alcoholics. Alcoholism was a symptom of frustration with dislocations and disruption of Native lifeways that occurred as increasing numbers of Anglos arrived in the region. After the Black Hawk War, the threat of liquor and Indian alcoholism would be used as an excuse to force more Indian removals and segregation from whites.⁷⁹

The account books of three merchants in the region—George Daven-

port, John Dixon, and a man named “Dousman”—reveal that by the early nineteenth century, traders did more than take Indians’ furs and other products to ship to distant markets, often selling out of the region. They also sold Indian-made products to local Anglos, Creoles, and Indians. Although Indians *sold* lead to Davenport, Dixon, and Dousman, Natives sometimes *bought* lead from them. Moccasins were a common item of trade; Davenport and Dixon sold them to whites for \$.25 to \$1.00 for a pair. In the Dousman winter book, Indians bought moccasins ranging from \$.50 to \$4.50. Among the other items Dousman sold to Indians were sugar, rice, and a buffalo robe, all products of Indian manufacture.⁸⁰

We may wonder why Indians bothered to go through a trader-intermediary in their sales to one another, but traders offered storage, credit to sellers for whatever they wanted, and a ready product to buyers. All of these products were apparently produced by women (except the buffalo robe, though it was probably tanned by a woman). Traders not only sold hunting equipment, but some loaned traps and others took traps and guns back when the hunting season was over, crediting their customers’ accounts.⁸¹

A few men became extremely wealthy in the fur trade, particularly those who arranged to get the Indians’ annuity money based on the cession treaties beginning in the late 1820s. Traders claimed that customers belonging to particular tribes owed money on their accounts, which could be paid out of the annuities. The Sauks and Mesquakies’ agent, Thomas Forsyth, complained about this practice, arguing that the merchants had carefully considered the risk of nonpayment in developing their price structure by charging 300–400 percent the value of trade goods each fall for goods on credit. In the spring, “taken altogether the trader has received on an average one half of the whole amount . . . for which he gave credit . . . and calls it a tolerable business.” But that other half remained on the merchants’ books for them to try to recover at treaty time. Forsyth condemned the practice, arguing, “it appears to me, that as all the above named traders are become wealthy (and are yearly growing more) in trading with the Indians, their claims for bad debts ought not to be listened to at any treaty or otherwise.”⁸² Farnham and Davenport, for example, received forty thousand dollars on debts of the Sauks and Mesquakies in their treaty of 1832.⁸³ There is no evidence, however, that these debts of the Indians were used to force them to cede land they would not otherwise have relinquished (nor that they had any choice).

Many of the Indian men and women’s activities were either subsis-

tence-related or allowed them to specialize in certain forms of production or in certain services sold to non-Indians, such as hunting, tanning, sugar making, and mining. Specialization was one way to maintain accommodation with immigrants, who in the early years served as customers. The waves of later immigrants were another challenge: the French Canadians and Creoles, who were motivated by the fur trade, needed the Native Americans to specialize independently. In contrast, the Anglo lead miners generally competed for resources to the detriment of peaceful relations. Successive waves of immigrants at first served as customers, but the newcomers eventually competed and sought to take over the Indians' resources and production.

“SETTLERS”

After the War of 1812, increasing numbers of people from the United States moved to the Green Bay and Prairie du Chien areas. The lead rush dramatically increased the white population of the mining region, particularly after 1826. By the end of the 1820s immigrants were arriving in many other sections of the Fox-Wisconsin region. These people called themselves “settlers.”

In some ways the settlers were very different from all the other Indian, Creole, black, and white people of the region. As the name they assumed suggests, they thought of themselves as not traveling very much during the course of a year. Indians migrated seasonally, from the winter hunting grounds to early spring sugar bushes followed by travel to the planting village, which then would be left for a month or two in midsummer for hunting, mining, or gathering expeditions. Creoles moved to their maple groves in the early spring, and the men in particular often traveled as fur trade workers. Black and white miners and other lead rushers moved around a great deal from one digging or furnace to another; “suckers” migrated seasonally from southern Illinois to the lead district. Furthermore, a substantial number of the young Anglos were at a restless age during which they traveled around seeking adventure, wealth, and opportunities. Even the judges and lawyers rode circuit.

Certainly, many of the settlers were people who had migrated several times before coming to the Fox-Wisconsin region and might move again. Quite a few were lead rushers who had been lured by the rumors of mineral wealth and learned of the land's potential by traveling through it; once tired of digging and keeping Bachelor's Hall, they thought the region's natural beauty and resources recommended it as a place to settle down to farming. Their version of farming—that a family should stay in the same place year round—was an alien notion to the

earlier residents. Many, if not most, of these settlers did not even realize how unusual the idea of "settling" was in the region.

The other thing that was different about these immigrants was that they brought white women with them in substantial numbers. The presence of the Anglo women wrought a change in Indian-white relations, less because of any of these women's attitudes and behaviors than because their presence severely limited the amount of intermarriage between Anglo men and Indian or Creole women. Certainly, there were many racist white women, but there were others who got along well in mixed-race communities; some white women feared Indians but others did not.⁸⁴ More importantly, when white men had married Native or Métis women, they had cultural and linguistic interpreters for wives, friends, and relatives as well as kin networks and access to peacefully acquired resources and Indian-made products. If white women had married Indian men, they would have had the same advantages, but this never happened. It is no coincidence that groups of Anglos who seldom married across cultures were the most ignorant of and isolated from the region's other cultures. These distances contributed significantly to the failure of multicultural accommodation in the region.⁸⁵

SETTLER-INDIAN TRADE

From the Indian perspective, although they competed for land, there was at least one benefit of the immigration of settlers: these whites often bought products and services from the Natives. The reminiscences of early settlers in this region reveal some of the dynamics of this trade. Exchanges might be negotiated formally or they might take the form of gifts with implied obligations of reciprocity.

An example of a formal trade took place during the 1830s in a newly built tavern near Lake Winnebago. An Indian woman called on the tavern's white landlady, Mrs. Pier, and arranged to exchange bedding feathers for flour. The Native woman apparently left well satisfied with her bargain and broadcast news of it in her own community. An early chronicler of the region reported that "soon after [the trade,] the room was filled with squaws anxious to barter feathers for either flour or pork."⁸⁶

Sometimes gift exchanges were graceful and satisfying to all parties. A memoir of John B. Parkinson's childhood in LaFayette County, Wisconsin, recalled that during the 1830s his family had established friendly relations with their Winnebago neighbors: "a girl about the size of my sister came to the house. My sister had on some shoes which were worn out at the toes. The next day the Indian girl came back and presented

her with a pair of beautiful moccasins. Mother then made a cake, and we took it over to the girl. They made much of our visit to the tent, and spread some skins on the ground for us to sit on.”⁸⁷ Kinzie recalled that “it was always expected that a present would be received graciously, and returned with something twice its value.” Her description of the exchange process at the Portage Indian Agency House suggests that protocol was enforced by the Native women (who gave Kinzie the honorary title of “mother” because her husband represented the U.S. government):

The Indian women were very constant in their visits and their presents. Sometimes it was venison—sometimes ducks or pigeons—whortleberries, wild plums, or cranberries, according to the season—neat pretty mats for the floor or the table—wooden bowls or ladles, fancy work of deer-skin or porcupine quills. These they would bring in and throw at my feet. If through inattention I failed to look pleased, to raise the articles from the floor and lay them carefully aside, a look of mortification and the observation, “Our mother hates our gifts,” showed how much their feelings were wounded.⁸⁸

Indians could control these exchanges in other ways. For example, some of the Winnebago men policing the mining region insisted that Esau Johnson and his men trade pork and flour for deerskins. On another occasion, one commissioner sent to treat with the Indians in 1829 called them “the most ingenious beggars in the world,” when instead they were clearly insisting on receiving certain gifts in exchange for services they rendered, doing so with a gently mocking sense of humor. In one case they required the commissioner to give razors for information on Sauk and Mesquakie place names, in another he had to give liquor and costumes for a dance he had requested.⁸⁹

Not all gift exchanges were understood nor gracefully received. Early settler Lydia Dow Flanders developed a strong dislike for Washington Woman, the Winnebago wife of her friend Yellow Thunder. In a brief essay about him, she wrote, “when wishing to return the value of some favor[,] it was sent by the hand of his wife, who, I grieve to say, often tried to bargain his generosity by the gain of something for herself.”⁹⁰ These occasions clearly lacked the gracious mutuality expected of gift exchanges.

EARLY ACCOMMODATION

There were times in the early nineteenth century when it seemed there would be accommodation, when Indians, Creoles, and Anglo settlers would be able to live together in the Fox-Wisconsin region. By the late

1820s it had become clear that Indians would be forced out of the mining region, but elsewhere newcomers sometimes coexisted with their Native and Creole neighbors peacefully and productively in patterns that might have led to long-term workable relationships. Settlers might have adopted a quasi-feudal pattern that had been established in Creole communities, where some Indian families lived as dependents. In these arrangements the husbands hunted and/or did other work for the white and mixed-race families, and the Indian families lived on land legally owned by the employers in relationships approaching peonage.

A similar relationship was described by John Parkinson, whose family moved to the lead mining region to farm in the mid-1830s. "Our nearest neighbors when we moved into the log cabin were some Winnebago who had their wigwam in a grove belonging to us, about a half a mile from the house," Parkinson wrote.⁹¹ (We may wonder whether the Winnebagos agreed that the grove, in fact, belonged to the Parkinsons.) Parkinson's father hired the Indian family's young boy to drive horses trampling wheat in a ring, a form of threshing, and "sometimes Father would get the men to work for him also." What type of work the men did, however, was not recorded.⁹²

The two families each learned some of the other's language so that they "managed to understand each other pretty well." The Winnebagos often came up to the house to use the family's grindstone; Parkinson's mother sometimes gave the visitors biscuits. This is the context in which the previously mentioned gift exchange of a cake for moccasins took place.⁹³

This relationship lasted only a few years, however, and Parkinson suggested two reasons for why it was broken. On the one hand, he explained, "we always got along well with them, but some of the neighbors did not treat them well, and after a few years they moved on." Furthermore, he wrote, "the Indian vanished from this section with the wild game."⁹⁴ Not only did the additional farm fields encroach on the animals' habitat, but the Parkinson family's free-ranging oxen and hogs must have disturbed the Indians' cornfields and competed with wild game for forage. Clearly, the Indians' wage work for the Parkinsons was meant to supplement rather than replace their traditional subsistence pattern. The problems of peaceful coexistence from the Indians' point of view seem to have included both white hostility and a shrinking resource base that made it more difficult for the Native family to achieve an independent sustenance. They were probably also wary of becoming subordinate to or dependent on the Parkinsons.

Anglos sometimes tried to incorporate Indians into their communities in a type of economic cooperation that required the Native people to

maintain a slightly different type of subordinate status. Like the Creoles, Anglos tried to hire or buy Indians as servants, but Indians tended to resist this role. For example, Forsyth wrote in 1821 that when “a Girl of the Fox Nation of Indians was sent down to St. Louis . . . by her mother to be raised among the white people, she fell into the hands of a man” who sold her for thirty dollars. Evidently the Mesquakies protested, so Forsyth reimbursed the buyer and placed her with a widow who “takes good care of the child.”⁹⁵ The Kinzies tried to train a Potawatomi boy as a servant at the Portage Indian Agency House, but he found ways to resist peacefully both his chores and a subordinate status.⁹⁶ A correspondent for the Galena newspaper in 1828 reported having met an English-speaking young Indian woman while traveling along the Mississippi. She had learned the language during several years’ residence with an Anglophone family at a military post, apparently as a servant, but she told him that, “becoming tired of the restraints of civilized life, she voluntarily [*sic*] returned to the enjoyments of that liberty and happiness which she fondly imagined to exist no where but in these her paternal wilds.”⁹⁷

Another set of relationships that combined cooperation, friendships, and multiethnic families and neighborhoods was more viable. The basic pattern of these relationships may be pieced together, in part, through the people who lived near a bend in the Rock River called Grand Detour, seventy-five miles northeast of Rock Island. East of this point Hūwanjka, the Little Elk, led a village of Winnebagos and Potawatomis in the early nineteenth century, while the Winnebago village of Pejaga, the Crane, was close by⁹⁸ (see map 3).

The Anglo community had its roots in traditional trader-Indian marriages. Sometime before 1793 Pierre LaSallier had come to the region to trade and had a daughter, Madeline, with a Potawatomi wife. Native Vermonter Stephen Mack Jr., probably a clerk or partner of LaSallier, married a local Winnebago woman named Honinega during the 1820s and himself began trading here.⁹⁹

Although Indians of the region chased off a white man from Peoria who tried to set up a ferry across the Rock River in 1827, Madeline LaSallier and her husband, Joseph Ogee, another Métis, were successful in establishing a ferry and tavern south of the bend in the river the following year, probably at or near an earlier Indian ferry site.¹⁰⁰ Joseph Ogee in 1830 leased and later sold the business to an Anglo named John Dixon, a former New York tailor who moved to the Rock River from Peoria with his wife, Rebecca, and their children.¹⁰¹

Dixon’s account books for 1830–32 recorded the purchases of Indian, Métis, French-surnamed, and Anglophone customers. They also pro-

vide glimpses of relationships around the Grand Detour, site of the future town of Dixon. It is clear that the Ogees' part-Indian ancestry, and especially Madeline's background and kin ties in the region, were crucial to the Indians' approval of their ferrying business. After the Dixons took over from the Ogees, the latter stayed in the neighborhood, probably even in an attached dwelling, providing links with the neighboring Indians: two of Dixon's customers appear in his ledger as "Tall Potawatami[,] Mrs Os onts husband" and "Tall Potawatami wife[,] Mrs O aunt."¹⁰² Similarly, Honinega created interracial ties for the community, as she was known and respected throughout the region for giving food and clothing to needy neighbors—Indian and white alike—and for nursing them when ill.¹⁰³

The Ogees separated about 1831; Madeline moved about twenty-eight miles southeast to Paw Paw Grove but left their three children with her ex-husband, Joseph. The children lived in the inn with the Dixon family, probably along with their father.¹⁰⁴ No doubt, the children's (and Joseph's) residence helped legitimize the Dixons' presence in the minds of the Indians.

Dixon's accounts hint at economic relationships between the handful of Anglo settlers and their neighbors. The Anglos paid Indian women with both cash and provisions to make moccasins, and they bought from Dixon items that the Indians had produced. Similarly, former tailor John Dixon cut coats and pantaloons while his sister-in-law, Mrs. Kellogg, did tailoring for other non-Indians, according to the account books. The Indians bought trade goods, food, and the services of a blacksmith (either Dixon or his employee). In other words, Indians and settlers alike produced for their neighbors.

Dixon's brother-in-law, Oliver W. Kellogg, bought shirts for Hūwa-ṅka and for a Sauk chief, Pashipaho, probably as gifts.¹⁰⁵ The account of George Elinger, who worked for Dixon, shows "cash for Crane [another local Indian village leader] to buy shirting," possibly a gift also.¹⁰⁶ These would seem to suggest that Kellogg and Elinger knew enough about the Indians' customs to understand the importance of gifts in diplomacy and neighborliness.

Joseph Ogee seems to have maintained contact with local Indians and traders: his account recorded "going to sack village" and "paid Mack's men on account of Kellogg."¹⁰⁷ (Probably a former partner or clerk for Ogee's father-in-law, Stephen Mack was the local trader who had married Honinega, a Winnebago woman from Grand Detour.)¹⁰⁸ Joseph Ogee's account for 1830 suggests that either he was trading with Indians or that, before Madeline left him, his family production and lifestyle tended toward Indian patterns: Ogee was credited with turning over to

Dixon twenty-one pounds of feathers, twenty-seven pounds of tallow, and sixteen pounds of sugar that year.¹⁰⁹

All of these exchanges suggest a certain amount of peaceful interaction in a mixed-race neighborhood, a cluster of two Indian villages and the Dixons' Anglo settlement. Honinega and the Ogees linked the Indians to the immigrant Anglos, no doubt helping to mediate and interpret across cultures. But there were limits. Dixon did not know the names of most of his Indian customers: he recorded their purchases generally under some designator such as "Plump Face," "No Nose," "Good Pay Long Yellow Man," and "One that Came with him."

Removal treaties beyond the control of the people at Grand Detour disrupted these interactions and rendered the neighborhood more homogeneously white and Anglo. In the Prairie du Chien treaty of 1829 with the Potawatomis, Madeline Ogee received a grant of land at Paw Paw Grove to which she moved in 1831. She later sold the land and migrated with the Potawatomis to Iowa and then after 1835 to Missouri, where her children joined her after Joseph Ogee died around 1838.¹¹⁰ As already noted, Hųwanįkga and his fellow Winnebagos were required by treaty to move away from Grand Detour to the north of the Wisconsin River, which they did about 1831. Honinega Mack, however, was permitted to stay since she was married to a white; in 1837 she, her husband, and their eleven children established a community of Anglos and Creoles at Rockton where the Pecatonica River joins the Rock. The Macks' Métis children later sold their land in the 1850s after their parents died and "went to Minnesota with their mother's friends."¹¹¹ The Dixons stayed on at the old Rock River ferry site, where ferrying and farming were no longer Indian occupations.

This cluster of Anglo, Indian, and Creole families and villages reveals one way that accommodation could be achieved in a frontier agricultural region. The ferry and trading posts provided sites for peaceful exchange and casual social interaction; the Ogee and Mack marriages provided kin ties, cultural links, and bilingual people who could interpret when necessary. Indian removal from the area came because of outside intervention rather than local conflicts.

Other race relations in the Fox-Wisconsin region were less benign. In 1830 white lead miners crossed to the west of the Mississippi and overran the Mesquakie village at Dubuque's old Mines of Spain, which the Indians had vacated temporarily, fearing a Sioux attack from the north. One of these squatters later described the village: "About seventy buildings constructed with poles, and the bark of trees remained. . . . Their council house, though rude, was ample in its dimensions. . . . On the inner surface of the bark there were paintings done with considerable artistic

skill, representing the buffalo, elk, bear, panther, and other animals of the chase; also their wild sports on the prairie, and even their feats in wars where chief meets chief, and warriors mix in bloody fray. Thus was retained a rude record of their national history."¹¹² The council house with its record of the Mesquakie national history was destroyed that summer, burned down "by some visitors in a spirit of vandalism."¹¹³

The whites worked in the Mesquakie lead mines, taking out 120,000 pounds of mineral before the federal government sent Col. Zachary Taylor with troops from Fort Crawford to remove them and guard the Mesquakies.¹¹⁴ The squatters bitterly resented being forced to return east of the Mississippi, one of them later writing, "the discoverers . . . were compelled to look across the water and see the fruits of their industry and enterprise consumed by the Indians" who had resumed their mining under guard.¹¹⁵ Colonel Taylor's protection was what the Indians had been asking for since the early 1820s and what the Native men had been trying to provide in its absence. This instance of government intervention to assure Indians' rights was, however, too little too late.

Elsewhere, similar events were taking place. The Black Hawk War of 1832 erupted when a group of Sauks and Mesquakies, with a smaller number of Winnebagos, Potawatomis, and Kickapoos, resisted removal from their lands east of the Mississippi, and U.S. Army troops with Midwestern militia men drove them out, killing most of the Indians in the process.¹¹⁶

The circumstances leading up to the Black Hawk War included a questionable 1804 treaty and land cession that the Sauks and Mesquakies repudiated as having been misrepresented to the signers. As far as Black Hawk was concerned, the central issue was the United States' insistence that the Sauks leave their village of Saukenuk located at the juncture of the Rock and Mississippi Rivers just seventy-five miles southwest from Grand Detour.

There had been the potential for peaceful accommodation, however, at the Rock River confluence with the Mississippi, where Mesquakie and Sauk villages were located near Rock Island, site of Fort Armstrong. A Mesquakie Métisse granddaughter of Acoqua, Marguerite LePage, and her husband, Antoine LeClaire, came to Rock Island in 1827. The half-Potawatomi Antoine was known as an outstanding interpreter who was literate and spoke French, Spanish, English, and fourteen Indian languages. Although she had been raised at Portage des Sioux, Missouri, Marguerite's kin ties and ability to speak Mesquakie in addition to French and English helped her make many local friends.¹¹⁷

Unfortunately, the local trader was English-born George Davenport, who came to Rock Island as an army supplier when Fort Armstrong

was founded in 1816; two years later he resigned to become a merchant in the area's Indian trade. (This is the same Davenport who, as mentioned earlier, plotted to monopolize the Winnebago trade in order to raise prices and also the man who received forty thousand dollars on bad debt claims in the treaty of 1832.) With him from Cincinnati came a wife, Margaret Bowling Lewis Davenport, and her children from a previous marriage, Susan M. Lewis and William Lewis. The following year, George and his sixteen-year-old stepdaughter had a son, George L. Davenport, perhaps the first white child born in the neighborhood. Whether or not locals viewed this first white child as a symbol, the younger George must have been the subject of much gossip since neither the Indians nor the whites would have approved of the nearly incestuous relationship that had produced him. The baby was sent to live his early years in a Mesquakie community, potentially creating ties that could have allied Indians and Anglos in the region. However, Susan Lewis had another son with her stepfather in 1823 when she was twenty-two years old.¹¹⁸ All the while, Margaret and Susan continued to live in George's household.

These events suggest that white women, isolated from kin and old friends in a frontier environment, could be very much at the mercy of abusive family members. Clearly the links between them and their Indian neighbors did not provide options or mediation to aid Margaret and Susan in extracting themselves from what appears to be a dysfunctional family. Unlike Hwaniḱga's wife Nḱagega, Margaret did not seem to feel that divorce was an alternative.

In 1828, a year after the LeClaires moved to Rock Island, the Indians of Saukenuk left for their usual winter hunt in October shortly before several Anglo "suckers" passed through the village on their way back to southern Illinois after a season at the lead mines. Because they were unfamiliar with the Indians' seasonal migration patterns, when the white lead rushers saw Saukenuk empty, they assumed that the Sauks had removed west of the Mississippi permanently.¹¹⁹ John Spencer, who was one of these Anglo miners, later recalled that the prospect of this attractive village was tempting enough to convince him and his companions to give up mining and settle there. "Having seen the country along the Rock Island Rapids in passing to and from the mines, and being much pleased with it, in less than a week . . . I was on my way." By the time he arrived in December 1828, eight white families were living in and around Saukenuk, some of them in the Sauk families' lodges.¹²⁰

The Indians were outraged to find whites living on their lands and in their houses. Black Hawk returned from his winter camp and had interpreter Antoine LeClaire write an announcement ordering the squatters

to leave, which Black Hawk delivered personally. In the spring, when the whites had not only remained but had been joined by others, George Davenport advised the Sauks to give up and move west of the Mississippi, as he had convinced the nearby Mesquakies to do. But many of the Sauks refused, repairing their houses and planting where they could between the squatters' fields.¹²¹ "What *right* had these people to our village, and our fields, which the Great Spirit had given us to live upon?" Black Hawk thought at the time, no doubt echoing the feelings of his fellow Indians.¹²²

At Saukenuk, some of the white settlers apparently tried to be good neighbors to the Indians. John Spencer took the trouble to observe and learn about Sauk economic practices. In addition, he and some of his fellow squatters tried to befriend Keokuk. Spencer recorded: "One day a party of three or four of us called upon Keokuk, feeling that he was friendly to us, and offered to plow his field. He accepted our proposition, and came out frequently and treated us to sweetened water which was made by putting maple sugar in the water, and was considered by the Indians a very nice drink."¹²³ Clearly, the Spencer party's gesture reflected the Anglos' gender roles: they considered the field to belong to Keokuk rather than his wives and thought that preparing the ground for planting was men's work, both concepts contrary to the Indians' traditions. We may wonder what the Keokuk family women thought of the plowing—if they were grateful, the maple punch may have been their way of thanking the men.

While Spencer and some of the others made efforts to coexist, the squatters' presence was extremely troublesome for the Indians. One problem was that the settlers fenced in their fields and were accustomed to let their livestock roam freely, so that they wandered into the Indians' land and did considerable damage to their crops. Keokuk proposed a compromise to the whites in the spring of 1829: if the settlers would confine their cattle at night, the Indians would guard their fields during the day. "All the settlers agreed to this proposition except Mr. Rinnah Wells, who thought it too much trouble," Spencer recalled. One night, after the Wells's cattle had damaged several Indian corn crops, "the Indians turned them into Mr. Wells's own field. After that, Mr. Wells took care of his cattle."¹²⁴

Nevertheless, there were sporadic incidents of violence during the next two years. Black Hawk later recalled some of these violent encounters. "Our people were treated badly by the whites on many occasions. At one time, a white man beat one of our women cruelly, for pulling a few suckers of corn out of his field, to suck, when hungry! At another time, one of our young men was beat with clubs by two white men for

opening a fence which crossed our road, to take his horse through." The man died from his beating.¹²⁵ According to Forsyth, "the squatters tried every method to annoy and trouble the Indians, by shooting their dogs, claiming horses not their own, complaining that the Indian horses broke into their cornfields, [and] selling Indians whisky for the most trifling articles against the wishes and request of the Indian Chiefs."¹²⁶

Why did accommodation break down? Clearly, there were too few mediators and interpreters such as the LeClaires and John Spencer. In addition, too many stubborn settlers like Rinnah Wells, veterans of the lead rush who had experienced Indian conflict rather than cooperation, had seen that if the Indians were pushed to the point of bloodshed, the U.S. government would remove the Native people. The whites were competing for the same fields and village sites with little thought to economic cooperation. Traders like Davenport, who stood to make a good deal of money in land speculation and treaty settlements, advised their Indian customers to leave and did not seek to negotiate with the government on their behalf. In addition, federal officials were committed to removal, not compromise.

If the Anglos hoped to harass the Sauks into leaving the area, the Indians developed a similar strategy with regard to the settlers. The whites complained in 1831 that the Indians were destroying their wheat crops, burning fences, shooting arrows into their cattle, and "pasturing their Horses in our Fields."¹²⁷ They reported that about three hundred warriors from Black Hawk's band and other Indians from the Sauk-Winnebago village farther up the Rock River routinely killed hogs and cattle and threatened the settlers with death.¹²⁸

The squatters frequently petitioned Illinois governors Ninian Edwards and John Reynolds, referred to the Indians as "bloodthirsty savages," and justified their own presence on these lands in a petition to Edwards, writing that they "Believ[ed] from many publications wrote by your Honour respecting Indian Affairs, that we had a right to settle here."¹²⁹ Lead miners and squatter settlers both believed that they were justified in taking the Indians' resources and pressured officials to remove the Natives. While the former spoke of getting "our full share of the wealth of those mines" so that they could enrich themselves and return home, the settlers expressed a Midwestern version of what Richard Maxwell Brown has called the "Homestead Ethic." Originating among white families in the backcountry of the eastern English colonies (and subsequent states) during the second half of the eighteenth century, it was their belief that they had the *right* to own a family-sized farm without fear of ruinous debt or challenges from Indians or others.¹³⁰

Black Hawk and his followers were keenly aware of the two groups'

different concepts of rights. "We acquainted our agent daily with our situation," he recorded, "and hoped that something would be done for us. The whites were *complaining* at the same time that *we* were *intruding* upon *their rights!* THEY made themselves out the *injured* party, and *we* the *intruders!* and called loudly to the great war chief to protect *their* property!"¹³¹

Governor Edwards of Illinois sided with settlers in 1827 and, in a situation paralleling experiences of the "Five Civilized Tribes" in the southeastern United States, demanded that the federal government remove all Indians from the state of Illinois. In 1831 Edwards's successor, John Reynolds, repeated the demand and threatened to use Illinois militias to enforce it.¹³²

Legally, the disputed treaty allowed the Indians to stay until the land was sold to whites; only a handful of squatters purchased lots at the October 1829 land sales. By 1832, however, George Davenport had purchased 2,652 acres there, which so enraged the Sauks that Black Hawk's associate Napope suggested that they kill not only Davenport but also LeClaire, Forsyth, and several other officials as well as Keokuk. The Sauks never attempted this, but it reveals the extent to which some Indians resented both Davenport's self-serving advice and the others' unwillingness to fight the injustice the Indians were experiencing.¹³³

The Sauks were forced west of the Mississippi in 1831 but were unhappy there. In 1832 roughly one thousand Indian men, women, and children recrossed to the east side of the Mississippi and attempted to resettle on the Rock River at Wabokieshiek's village along with about one thousand others, mostly Sauks with some Mesquakies, Winnebagos, Potawatomis, and Kickapoos. The majority of these people were slaughtered during the Black Hawk War by Anglos who called them invaders.¹³⁴ United States officials used this event as an excuse to force more land cessions in the region.

