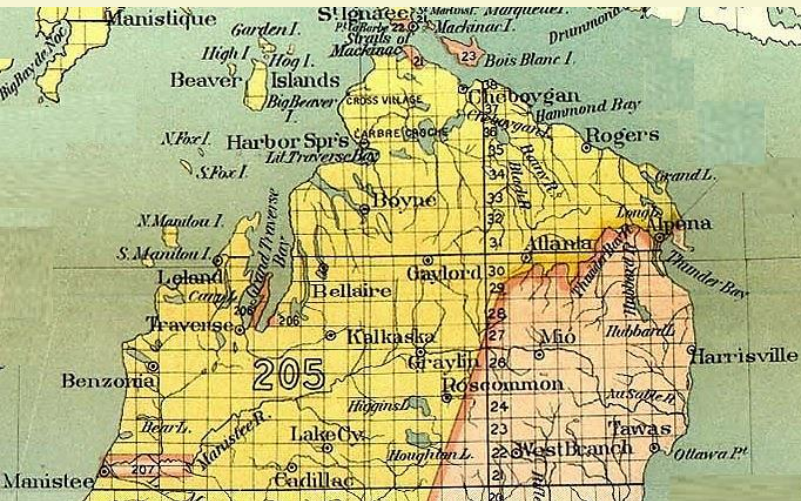


**Discover ♦ Learn ♦ Share**

Native Americans have been and continue to be an important part of Otsego County history. Discovering who was here before us and learning about the Indigenous People is the topic of this week’s Update. Rather than trying to cover such a broad topic that goes back 12,000 years with the Paleo-Indians, let’s narrow our scope to the past 200 years.

A question often asked is “What tribes were in Otsego County?” Part of the answer can be found on the map shown below from the Treaty of Washington in 1826. The yellow area which includes Otsego County was primarily inhabited



by the Odawa also known as Ottawa. The pink area represents the area where the Chippewa also known as Ojibway were living. Notice how close Otsego County is to the border. It is likely both tribes migrated through our area.

According to Eric Hemenway, Director of the Repatriation, Archives and Records Department for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, “the Otsego area was more of a pass through and natural resource gathering area than one of settlement for tribes. The Odawa and Ojibway both hunted, trapped and gathered in this area. Before the mass logging of the mid-1800s, this was some of the thickest swamps and forests in the state, making it very difficult for travel and living. The majority of Anishnaabek lived on the shores of the great lakes, not the interior.”

**Thinking Like A Historian**

- **Turning Point** - 1826 when the Treaty of Washington was signed.
- **Through Their Eyes** – Let’s be sure to include the Native Americans’ view of Otsego County history.

*Did you know Otsego County was originally named “Okkuddo”? It’s thought to be an Indian word for sickly or stomach pains. More likely, it’s a term fabricated by Henry Schoolcraft who was a US Indian Affairs Agent. “Otsego” is also an Indian word (Iroquois language) but comes from New York, not Michigan.*

**Discover ♦ Learn ♦ Share**

Even though there isn’t a book written (yet) specifically about Native Americans in Otsego County, here are 2 must reads:

1. Rethinking Michigan Indian History by Patrick Russell LeBeau. Great overview and teaching resource with CD.
2. Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan’s Native Americans by Charles Cleland. As the author says, “This book is written for a sophisticated lay reader who is curious about details of the histories and cultures of Great Lakes Indians.”

What other books would you recommend?

**Discover ♦ Learn ♦ Share**

“Archeological Atlas of Michigan” by Wilbert Hinsdale includes this map of Otsego County. Red highlights show river navigation in Corwith Township as well as mounds and a village in Otsego Lake Township. Notice the activity around nearby Twin Lakes in Lewiston. Hinsdale’s book was published in 1931.

