

# h history theatre



## Play Guide

**Play written by Carlyle Brown**



**30 East Tenth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55101  
651-292-4323 Box Office  
651-292-4320 Group Sales  
historytheatre.com**

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**George Bonga**

## George Bonga

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In the late 1700's, British military Captain Daniel Robertson lived at Fort Michilimackinac, Michigan. He owned a slave named Jean Bonga; whose lineage traced from Africa to Jamaica and then the French-speaking West Indies. Upon Robertson's death in 1787, he freed all of his slaves which included Jean. Jean went into fur trading as did his son, Pierre. Pierre went on to be a servant of Alexander Henry, the commander of the Northwest Company's Red River Brigade. Pierre was considered extremely trustworthy and was invested with authority to be left in charge of the fort in Henry's absence.

George was born on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1802 in Fond du Lac near present-day Duluth. He was one of five kids born to Pierre and his Ojibwe wife, Ogibwayquay. Pierre was successful enough to send his children to school in Montreal, where George mastered French and learned writing skills. He was able to speak seven languages including English, French, and Ojibwe. After George's education was finished, he along with his brother Stephen returned to Minnesota Territory to follow the family tradition of fur trading. George worked for the American Fur Company in the 1820s and in the 1830s throughout the northern Minnesota Territory and became well-known for his strength, endurance, and guide skills on trading voyages. At 6-feet, 6-inches tall, Bonga was a foot taller than the average French-Canadian Voyageur. He was very skilled, paddling rushing rapids and hiking rough portages with ease. It is said that he was able to carry 700-pounds around the St. Louis River. This is likely an exaggeration, but if Bonga carried even half that amount, it was an extraordinary feat given Voyageurs normally carried two 90-pound parcels.

In 1820, when Bonga was 18, he was hired by explorer and Governor Lewis Cass to serve as a guide during a search for the Mississippi headwaters. Cass chose Bonga because he was a skilled canoeist, spoke the Ojibwe language, and knew the area, which was part of his mother's Pillager band of the Leech Lake tribe. The expedition was difficult, especially when the group encountered the Savanna Portage. This portage area was a mosquito-infested six-mile trail running through muck that, if stepped into, could come up to a person's waist. However, Bonga's jokes and singing kept up the group's spirits. Cass would go on to use Bonga as an interpreter at a treaty council held in the Fond du Lac territory with the Ojibwe.



**Governor Lewis Cass**

As a translator, Bonga felt comfortable between white and Native -American communities. George claimed to be both the first black man born in this part of the country and one of the first two white men that ever came into the territory. (He was only one of 14 African-Americans counted in the Minnesota Territory in the 1850 census.) Often during treaty signings, Bonga was considered white because it was common to only classify people either as Indian or white during this time.



George in retirement

He also often spoke out against white men who treated Ojibwe trappers poorly. Writing letters on behalf of the Ojibwe, he complained to the state government about individual Indian agents in the region. The letters illustrate his connections to both the white government and the Ojibwe, showing further how Bonga crossed cultural boundaries easily during this time.

During his time as a voyageur, George Bonga found himself in the middle of Minnesota’s first murder case. Alfred Aitkin, 21, who ran a trading post on what is now Cass Lake, had been fatally shot by an Ojibwe man involved in a love triangle that Aitkin tried to squelch. Aitkin’s father, William, worked for John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company and his mother was Ojibwe. The elder Aitkin asked Bonga to track down the suspect Che-ga-wa-skung, after he escaped and the initial search party failed to find him. Bonga headed out into the subzero chill of January 1837 to track Che-ga-wa-skung and bring him back to stand trial. Six days later, he returned with the suspect tied to a dog sled and transported him 250 miles to Fort Snelling. Che-ga-wa-skung was eventually acquitted at a territorial trial in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Although found guilty of the crime, since Aitkin’s mother was Ojibwe, the jurors ruled that the murder didn’t count because the deceased wasn’t a full-blooded white citizen.

In 1842, the American Fur Company shut down due to the decline in supply and demand for furs. Bonga continued working as a trader and opened a lodge on Leech Lake with his wife Baybahmausheak Ashwewin, where he enjoyed telling stories of early Minnesota and after dinner singing. As fur trading prospects declined, Bonga turned to the Indian trade. He supervised annuity payments to the Ojibwe and worked with local Indian agents. He interpreted again in 1868 for Indian agent Joel Bean Bassett in negotiations with the Mississippi Band of Ojibwe in White Earth, MN.

Throughout his life, Bonga continued to be an outspoken advocate of fair treatment for the Ojibwe people, recommending that the government acquire good land for the Ojibwe so they could maintain their traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild rice and maple sap. As times changed, so did his business, and by 1870, he was a retired dry goods merchant. Nonetheless, he was rather prosperous and had homes in Lac Platte, Otter Tail, and Leech Lake. He had five children with two wives Nahgahnashequay and Ashwewin: Peter, William, Jack, Susan, and George. Sources differ as to the year Bonga died, with some stating 1874, 1880, or 1884.

Though the spelling is different, Bungo Township in Cass County is named after Bonga’s family along with Lake Bonga, located north of Itasca State Park on the White Earth Reservation.



# African Americans in Minnesota during the 1800's

**1802:** George Bonga the first known person of African ancestry is born in the Minnesota Territory near Duluth

**1830's:** Officers at Fort Snelling bring their slaves to the territory.

**1834-1836:** Harriet and Dred Scott live and work at Fort Snelling. When taken back to the south they sue for freedom since they had been in a free territory.

**1849:** Minnesota becomes a Territory. The census of the territory states that 40 people of African descent live in Minnesota. The majority live in St. Paul and work as cooks and barbers.

**1850s:** Free blacks and escaped slaves follow the Mississippi River North to Minnesota

**1854:** The territorial legislature considers a law requiring all persons of African blood to pay a bond of \$300-\$500 to insure good behavior. The bill is defeated 10-6.

**1857:** U.S. Supreme Court comes to the Dred Scott Decision that they are property and do not have a right to sue.

**1858:** Minnesota becomes a State. Republicans give black men the right to vote in the new state constitution, but because of too much push back they decide that the law should only allow white men to vote.

**1860:** Eliza Winston, slave owned by the Christmas family, is brought to Minnesota while on vacation. She meets Emily Goodridge Grey a free African American abolitionist. With her help, she files for freedom. She is pronounced to be free by Judge Vanderburgh.

**1861:** The Civil War begins. Minnesota is the first state to offer troops to the Union. 104 black men from Minnesota serve in the Minnesota regiments.

**1863:** St. James African Methodist Episcopal, the first Black Church in Minnesota is founded. They purchase a building in 1869.

**1863:** April 12<sup>th</sup>, Reverend Robert Hickman and a group of 76 black men, women, and children arrive by raft. They are pulled by the steamboat Northerner. Many of them are escaped slaves. Ten days later another 218 blacks arrive in St Paul.

**1866:** Pilgrim Baptist Church is formally recognized. Reverend Robert Hickman continues to lead the congregation, they build a worship space in 1871 and Robert becomes the official pastor in 1877.

**1868:** The Minnesota Constitution is amended, giving black men the right to vote in state elections.

**1869:** Minnesota Legislature forbids school segregation.

**1870:** The Fifteenth Amendment passes and gives black men the right to vote in federal elections.

**1885:** The Western Appeal Newspaper begins and becomes a significant black newspaper. 1886, John Quincy Adams becomes its editor. The Western Appeal and John Quincy are known for using the newspaper to market to blacks to move to Minnesota.

# Fur Trading and Voyageurs

Pierre Raddison



Fur trading was one of the earliest economic exchanges in North American history with the American Indians traded along the Mississippi River for centuries before the arrival of Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The French began to control the fur trade in the Minnesota Territory between 1500-1800. Being less focused on conquering and controlling territories compared to the British, Spanish and Americans, the French relationship with American Indian Tribes stayed mostly positive.

Pierre Raddison, a French Explorer (who the Raddison Hotels are named after) and his brother-in-law Medard Chouart Sieur des Groseillers (where it is believed the name for Gooseberry Falls comes from) are believed to be the first white men to see Lake Superior in 1660 and the Mississippi River in 1661. Pierre had ambitions to set up a fur trading company but needed backing. He went to the French to see if they were interested in funding his endeavors and when they turned him down he petitioned the English. Through his durable trading patterns, he was responsible for the incorporation of the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) in 1670 by English Royal Charter. The charter gave the company complete control over all of the rivers flowing into the Hudson Bay. The area was known as "Rupert's Land" (named after the prince) and totaled 1.5 million square miles becoming one of the largest landowners in the world.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the company had to evolve or cease to exist. They became a retailer in fine homeware at the start of the retail era. In Canada they have subsidiaries such as Home Outfitters and in the U.S. Lord and Taylor. July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 they took over Saks Fifth Avenue and in 2015 they purchased German chain Galeria Kaufhof.



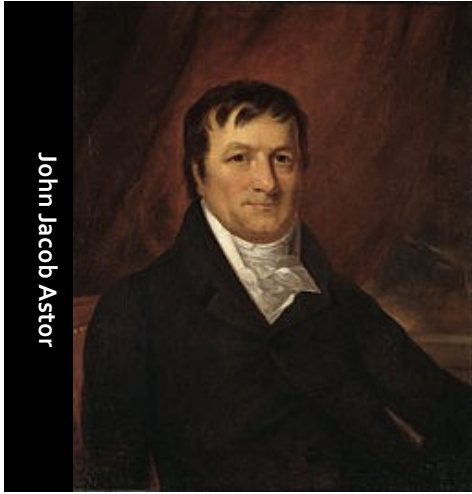
The North West Company (NWC) was founded in 1779 and was primarily managed by Highland Scots who had migrated to Montreal. The company originally had 16 shares held by 9 people. This included business leaders Simon McTavish, Issac Todd, and James McGill. In 1804 XY Company and NWC merged but held control of the NWC name. In 1821 the HBC and NWC were forced to merge due to an intervention of the British Government to try to put an end to the violent competition that had been raging between them for years. At that time, they reduced their posts from a total of 175 to 52 due to many of the posts being redundant. In 1987 a rebirth of the NWC as a separate entity became a retailer for underserved rural communities and urban markets in Northern and Western Canada, Alaska, South Pacific Islands and the Caribbean. Their main focus now is to provide food to those areas as well as needed household items.

North West Company Arms



The American Fur Company was founded in 1808 by John Jacob Astor, a German immigrant to the United States. Under his leadership, the company grew to monopolize the fur trade in the United States by 1830, and became one of the largest and wealthiest businesses in the country. On the frontier, the American Fur Company opened the way for the settlement and economic development of the Midwestern and Western United States.

John Jacob Astor



Astor's company was able to capitalize on the young nation's anti-British sentiments to take over many formerly British fur-trapping regions and trade routes. It expanded very rapidly and successfully. Astor left his company in 1830 and went on to invest in New York City real estate and later becoming a famed patron of the arts. By the 1840s silk was replacing the demand for fur in Europe. The company tried to diversify into other industries like lead mining but they were not successful. By the year 1847 the company ceased in trading and folded.

As the fur trade become more organized, a class system was set up in the industry. At the top of the hierarchy were the partners (the founders of the company) with the Fur traders at the posts next in line. Below them were in rank: Clerks: young businessmen learning the business and would represent the firm at a trading post, the interpreters for the company and the natives they were coming in contact, and at the bottom of the hierarchy was the Voyageur.

Voyageur, the French word for traveler, were people hired to work for the fur traders to transport goods through the territories to specific posts. At each post, goods were exchanged for furs and the furs were sent to the large cities for shipment to the East Coast. Another term to describe the job of a Voyageur was a "canoemen". They were known for their skills at building and handling canoes through the lakes and rivers of the East and Central Canada and North East and North Central of what is now the United States. The American Indian Tribes taught these skills to them during the early years of the trade when relationships between Voyageurs and the American Indians were still strong. They were known for their strength and their ability to carry packs of goods weighing at least 120 pounds in addition to helping carry the canoe to the next entry point.

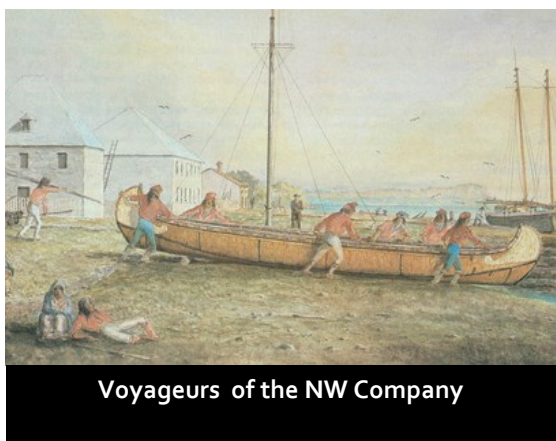
There were two types of Voyageurs, the differences came from where they would travel. First you have the Mangeurs de lard (pork eaters), named after their diet of pork fat. They were the ones that traveled between Montreal and Grand Portage each year. The second was the hommes du nord (Northern men) or Hivernants (winterers) the men that came from the inland to Grand Portage.

Pay scales of the Voyageurs- for a bowman and the steersman being more important—received 1,200 livres (French Payment) as well as equipment totaling: two blankets, two shirts, two pairs of trousers, two handkerchiefs, fourteen pounds of tobacco and a few trifling articles. If they were a middleman, or milieu they would receive the same equipment except only ten pounds of tobacco and only 400 livres.



The customs and rituals of the voyageur have a rich history of song and story. Some of these rituals included stopping by the Church of St Anne (close to Montreal), the last church that would be seen on their journey, and give a donation and prayers for safe travel and prosperity on their journey and to return home safe to friends and family. Another was to honor those that had been lost on other journeys. They would mark the spot of a lost life with a cross and when they would pass a cross they would take off their caps and one of them would recite a prayer.

A majority of Voyageurs were not married during their time working due to the young age when they began.



Voyageurs of the NW Company

A few had a wife and family in Montreal while some got married after they had retired from their work. Many Voyageurs never married due to a higher death rate because of working in dangerous waters with the majority not knowing how to swim. Drowning was common, along with broken limbs, compressed spine, hernias, and rheumatism. The outdoor living also added to the hazard of life and limb with swarms of black flies and mosquitoes, often kept away by the men sleeping with a smudge fire that caused respiratory, sinus and eye problems. Individuals wanting to rid themselves of the swarms that followed them often applied a Native America ointment made from bear grease and skunk urine

Part of the fur trade story is the emergence of the Metis people. The Metis were the children and descendants of marriages between (most often) native women and voyageur men. The intermarriage created extensive kinship networks and communities made up of French and Indian families in the fur trade territories. Less well-known, however, is that there were also people of African heritage who were part of the fur trade and part of the same kinship networks.

Several factors led to the end of the voyageur era. Fur animals became less plentiful and demand for furs dropped. Products such as silk became extremely popular and replaced beaver fur, declining the fur trade further. Improved transportation methods lessened the requirement for transport of furs and trading goods by voyageurs. The presence and eventual dominance of the Hudson Bay boat-based entry into the fur trade areas eliminated a significant part of the canoe travel, reducing the need for voyageurs. The completion of the Pacific rail line in 1882 finally eliminated the need for long-distance transportation of furs by voyageurs. With the completion of the railways and the closure of many Forts as rendezvous points, 1892 is considered the end of the voyageurs era.





# Ojibwe of Minnesota

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Ojibwe, also known as Anishinaabe or Chippewa, essentially means “First-” or “Original-People”. The Ojibwe slowly began to migrate from the east coast of present-day United States and first settled in what is now Minnesota around 500 years ago. Subsisting off of the land, the people utilized the abundant water sources available for fishing and harvesting wild rice. Within the culture, there were ceremonies performed for important stages in the lives of both men and women. Elders within the tribe were respected and venerated.

For centuries, the Ojibwe exclusively occupied and utilized the region of Northern Minnesota. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a series of decisions and authorizations from the United States government began to severely affect all Native peoples, not just the Ojibwe. With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 greatly expanding the borders of the United States, the American migration into Indian Territory began.

Today there are about 150,000 people in the United States who identify themselves as Ojibwe. In the Minnesota Nation there is a growing desire to revitalize cultural traditions and the Ojibwe language. Several Ojibwe language immersion schools have emerged throughout Minnesota to preserve and teach younger generations. Newer forms of culture, such as the modern powwow, are also popular across the state. Many tribe members still harvest wild rice, fish, and hunt wild game, just as the Ojibwe have done for hundreds of years.

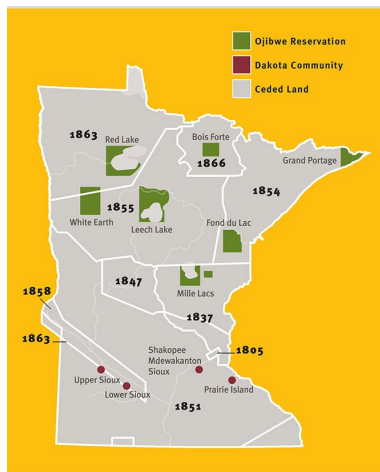
## Relationship between Voyageurs & Ojibwe in the 1800's

As the European push inward into North America began in the 18th century, the various tribes of the Ojibwe began to trade furs and other goods, primarily with the French and British. The Grand Portage became a vital part of the fur trade, situated on the northeastern tip of Minnesota. Once this path into Ojibwe land was achieved, the fur trade greatly affected life for the tribes. They were exposed to new technology, such as metal tools, traps, and guns.

Native American tribes had been trading amongst themselves for centuries before the first European contact. At first, the trading relationships between the Voyageurs and Ojibwe were mutually beneficial. As white explorers and Voyageurs became more numerous in the region of what is now northern Minnesota, the fur trade experienced a boom period that lasted until the 1840s. During that time, various treaties were put into place by the white population that slowly but surely ceded native land to the United States government. The treaties were often presented as offerings of peace between warring tribes but set the stage for almost a century's worth of decrees removing land from the various tribes throughout Minnesota.

As the land was taken away, resources within it were dwindling. The economy suffered as the fur trade slowly waned. Game was becoming increasingly scarce. Annual payments of food and money, as well as the ability to hunt and fish on the ceded land, were promised by the Americans, and the tribes had no choice but to agree to the terms. However, that promise, like so many others before and after, was not to be honored. The more that was taken away from the tribes, the more dependent they became on assistance from the government and settlers.

# Minnesota Native American Treaties



The word Minnesota comes from a Dakota Indian word meaning "sky-tinted water" Two major Native American tribes—the Dakota and the Ojibwe — lived in the area that is now Minnesota. Small groups from other tribes also resided in the state, including the Winnebago who once had reservation land. By the late 1860s treaties had pushed the Indians off lands they had occupied and moved them onto reservations.

From the mid-1800s, the official policy of the United States government toward the American Indian was to confine each tribe to a specific parcel of land called a reservation. Agencies were established on or near each reservation. A government representative, usually called an agent (or superintendent) was assigned to each agency. Their duties included maintaining the peace, making payments to the Native Americans based on the stipulations of the treaties with each tribe, and providing a means of communication between the native population and the federal government.

Dakota and Ojibwe bands in Minnesota negotiated treaties that ceded vast tribal territories to the United States. In exchange, the tribes were promised goods, services, cash payments and reservations. At times, tribes retained access to resources on lands that were sold.

The following is list of the major treaties between the European Settlers and Native American's in Minnesota.

**1805:** In 1805 the Dakota ceded 100,000 acres of land at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. U.S. Army Lt. Zebulon Pike negotiated the agreement so the U.S. government could build a military fort there. Of the seven Indian leaders present at the negotiations, only two signed the treaty.

Pike valued the land at \$200,000, but no specific dollar amount was written into the treaty. At the signing, he gave the Indian leaders gifts whose total value was \$200. The U.S. Senate approved the treaty, agreeing to pay only \$2,000 for the land.

Generally, the Indians who signed treaties did not read English. They had to rely on interpreters who were paid by the U.S. government. It is uncertain whether they were aware of the exact terms of the treaties they signed.

Minneapolis and St. Paul are located on land ceded in 1805.

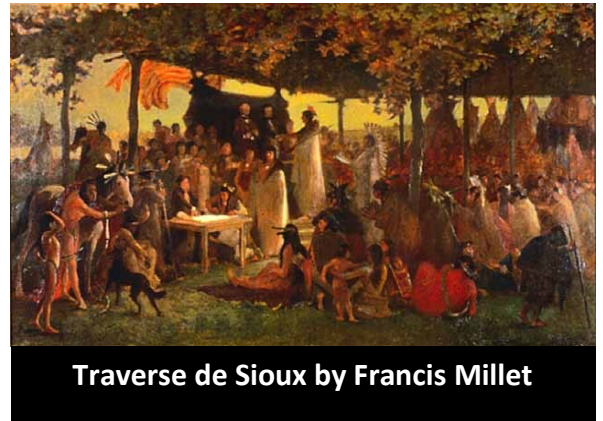
**1825/26:** The U.S. government arranged the Prairie du Chien treaty between the Dakota and Ojibwe, as well as the Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, Iowa, Potawatomi, and Ottawa tribes. This treaty was to draw boundaries which would divide up the territory into native land within a concept of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota as individual states. After that, it was simpler for the government to negotiate with the Indians for the purchase of their lands.



**1837:** At Fort Snelling in 1837, the Ojibwe ceded their land north of the 1805 area to the U.S. government in exchange for cash, the payment of claims made by traders, and annual payments of cash and goods, or annuities.

Later that year, a group of Dakota leaders was brought to Washington, D.C., having been told that they would be negotiating the settlement of their southern boundary. Instead, they were pressured into ceding all their land east of the Mississippi. The land was valued at \$1,600,000, but the U.S. government agreed to pay far less. The Dakota were promised the interest on \$300,000, invested at 5 percent. This amounted to \$15,000 per year. The government kept control over one-third of this money, reserving (but not allocating) it for education. Another \$200,000 was paid to friends and relatives of the tribe and to settle debts, and \$16,000 was given to the Dakota leaders as an incentive to sign the treaty. Each year for 20 years, \$23,750 was allocated for annuity payments, food, education, equipment, supplies, and government services.

**1851:** Minnesota became a territory in 1849. White settlers were eager to establish homesteads on the fertile frontier. Pressured by traders and threatened with military force, the Dakota were forced to cede nearly all their land in Minnesota and eastern Dakota in the 1851 treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota. At Traverse des Sioux, the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of the Dakota ceded 21 million acres for \$1,665,000, or about 7.5 cents an acre. Of that amount, \$275,000 was set aside to pay debts claimed by traders and to relocate the Dakota. Another \$30,000 was allocated to establish schools and to prepare the new reservation for the Dakota.



**Traverse de Sioux by Francis Millet**

The U.S. government kept more than 80 percent of the money (\$1,360,000), with only the interest on the amount--at 5 percent for 50 years--paid to the Dakota. The terms of the Mendota treaty with the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute bands of the Dakota were similar, except that those payments were even smaller. The treaties of 1851 also called for setting up reservations on both the north and south sides of the Minnesota River. But the U.S. Senate changed the treaties by eliminating the reservations and leaving the Dakota with no place to live. Congress required the Dakota to approve this change before appropriating desperately needed cash and goods. President Millard Fillmore agreed that the Dakota could live on the land previously set aside for reservations, but only until it was needed for white settlement.

**1854:** The arrowhead region of northeastern Minnesota was purchased from the Ojibwe. The Grand Portage, Fond du Lac and Lake Vermillion reservations were established.

**1855:** The Ho-Chunk ceded their land in Minnesota, except for one small reservation in the southeastern corner of the Territory. The Ojibwe ceded land in north-central Minnesota. Nine reservations were created on this traditional Ojibwe land.

**1858:** A month after Minnesota became a state, a group of Dakota traveled to Washington, D.C., to discuss their reservation. The Dakota were pressured to cede the lands on the north side of the Minnesota River. They received 30 cents per acre, estimated to be only about 5 percent of the land's value. When the funds were finally distributed in 1860, most of the \$266,880 promised went to pay debts claimed by traders

## Sioux Rebellion of 1862

One month after Minnesota became a State, Dakota people were taken to Washington to sign away the northern half of their holdings along the Minnesota River, in acknowledgement that white settlers had encroached on the land and planned to stay. The ceded land was to be sold to settlers, the proceeds going to the Dakota. Without access to the land upon which they had hunted for generations, they had to rely on treaty payments for their survival. The inadequate money and goods often arrived late. There was nothing to hunt on their diminished lands. Crooked agents and traders withheld annuities and payments.

Although there were warehouses full of food, trader Andrew Myrick at Lower Sioux Agency would not consent to Little Crow's plea to feed the starving people. By summer 1862, most of the Dakota were starving. An almost accidental killing of a farm family by hungry young warriors touched off the fighting between Native Americans and Minnesota white settlers in 1862. Nearly 400 Dakota men were tried by a military commission, and 303 were sentenced to death. President Abraham Lincoln pardoned many, but 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato. The remaining Dakota were sent to prison in Iowa or to reservations at Crow Creek in what is now South Dakota, and at Santee in Nebraska Territory.

In 1863 the Dakota were forced to give up all their remaining land in Minnesota, and the U.S. government canceled all treaties made with them. The Ojibwe reluctantly ceded most of their remaining land in northwestern Minnesota in treaties of 1863, 1864, and 1867. In 1871 Congress ended the practice of making treaties with Indian nations. However, past treaties remained in place.

**1899:** Nelson Act was the Minnesota application of the federal Dawes Allotment Act of 1833. A commission was to negotiate the relinquishment of all Ojibwe reservations, except White Earth, which would be allotted in severalty to Indian families who moved there so that the rest of the land could be sold to European Americans. Red Lake refused allotment and sold the north part of its reservation in order to stay on their land. These actions were illegal and violated the treaties which the U.S. had made with the tribes.



Taoyateduta—Little Crow

1810-1863

# ACTIVITIES



# Personal Identity

Students will reflect on different aspects of their own identity.

Who Am I? This activity is designed to raise awareness of how we perceive ourselves and others. Your inner identity is more about the way you feel, how you act and what you think and say. It's about · personality · cultural background · feelings and thoughts about ourselves and others · emotional responses to life · how we respond and deal with stresses and challenges · how we communicate · how we respond and deal with others in our lives · how connected we feel to other people · our friends and family · our relationships If you were to do an identity map again it would look a whole lot different.

Explain to the students that in this lesson, they define and reflect on their own identity.

Write "identity" on the board and ask the students to brainstorm its meanings.

Ask each student to create an "Identity Map" which depicts all the components that make up their own identity, including the varied roles they play. Show students how to create their maps by putting a circle on the board and writing "Me" in the center. Then, draw lines out from the circle and write words such as "loyal," "artist," "daughter," etc.

Divide the class into small groups and ask students to share their maps with each other. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

What 3 words would you choose to best describe yourself?

Why do those words accurately describe you?

What 3 words would your family or friends use to describe you?

How accurate are other's descriptions of you?

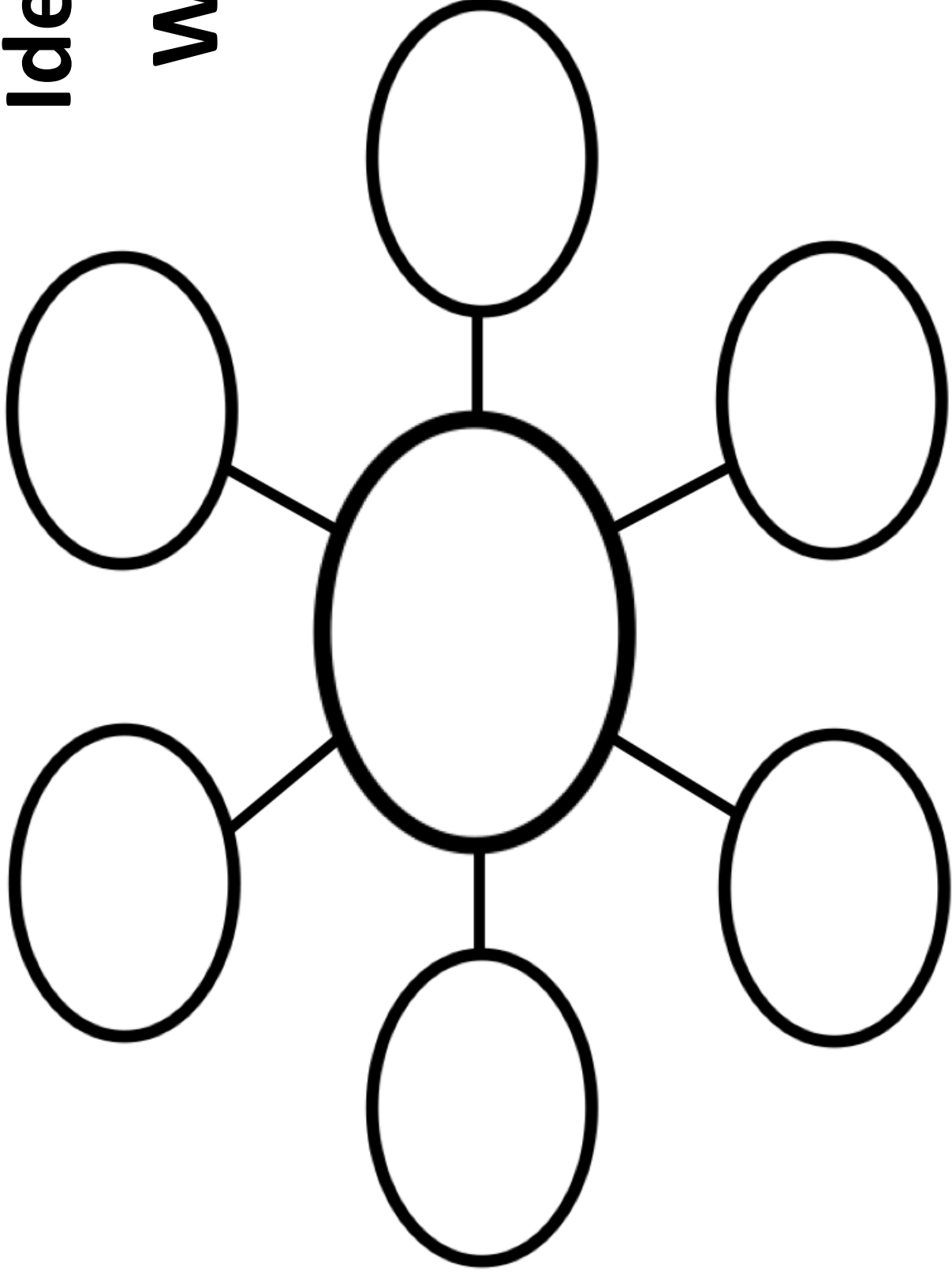
Ask for volunteers from the small groups to share their insights with the class.

## Extension Activity:

Imagine that a family member 50 years from now is trying to learn about you. You can put five objects into a time capsule that will tell that person what is important to you and what family traditions are important to you. Write a list of the five objects and explain how each one would help them understand your part in your family's cultural journey.

**Identity**

**Web**



# Stitching It Together

## Lesson Objectives

1. Understand, appreciate and respect differences and similarities in their classroom and school
2. Identify the different communities of which they are a part
3. Feel part of a greater classroom community, complete with similarities and differences among participants.

Note: Before beginning the lesson, address any special concerns that families with adopted children and those living in foster care may have about the activity. You may want to call parents or guardians in advance to find out whether the activity raises sensitive issues with their child. Encourage parents or guardians to be involved with children completing the activity. For example, adopted children may want to include both sets of parents, or solely the adoptive parents or the biological parents.

## Essential Questions:

What is a community?

Who is part of our classroom community?

How does it make you feel when you are part of something?

How can a quilt help to tell a story about the people who put it together?

How could a story quilt be part of your identity and culture?

## **Framework**

People of many cultures and time periods have used quilting to pass down their traditions and history. African-American quilters, in particular, have left a legacy of their stories through quilts. Creating quilts, from any materials, can be an ideal way to help students tell their own stories through art while working collaboratively.

In this lesson, the creation of a quilt made of individual, diverse squares provides a metaphor for one unified classroom community. Just as the students' individual families are diverse and unique when looked at in isolation, they all contribute to their community when woven together. Students learn about each other's unique qualities, share their own backgrounds and families with pride, and learn how each diverse square can be joined together to represent inclusion and unity.

Hold up a picture or have a real quilt to show the students. Have them answer the following questions.

What is the object called? *It's a quilt.*

What do you know about quilts? *Quilts are made up of many different scraps of material or squares stitched or put together. Each individual piece can look exactly the same, or more frequently, each can be unique.*

Do you have a quilt at home? If so, what does it look like?

Why do people make or use quilts? *Quilts have been made and used throughout history to keep warm, decorate homes, express views or remember a loved one. Some quilts can even tell a story about the people who put it together or the time period in which it was put together. That is called a story quilt.*



Imagine that your principal has asked you to use these ideas to tell a very important story. It is the story of all of the families that make up our class community or even your school community, and she or he would like you to use a quilt to tell that story. The quilt will tell the story of your individual family, but it will also tell the story of how all of the families of students in your class or school have contributed to our school community and our overall community. Just like a quilt, we are all part of something greater.

### Handout Our Family Quilt

The handout is divided into four squares, which you will use to create your quilt. You will illustrate each square to show something different about your family or another student's family. Your quilt should reflect what you've uncovered about your family throughout this series of lessons. You may want to think about what your family likes to do together, different places you've visited, unique aspects of your heritage, what your heritage has contributed to the community, or something you've learned about how your family is the same or different as another family.

To create the atmosphere of a quilting bee, have students sit in a circle and chat as they create their illustrations.

Once all classmates have finished, take turns presenting your four squares to the rest of the class. As you present, reflect upon how all of the families have contributed to the larger school community.

Finally, work with your teacher and other students to mix up and stitch, staple or glue all squares together to create one quilt that tells the story of how different families contribute to one community.

### **Quilt piece should reflect what you have uncovered about your family such as:**

1. What your family likes to do together
2. Unique aspects of your heritage
3. What has your heritage contributed to the community
4. Something new you found out about your family or a specific family


# Negotiating a Treaty

## Lesson Objectives:

1. Recognize the impact of the Indian Removal Act on displaced Natives in the early West and the impact on Native attitudes today.
2. Experience negotiating skills through a treaty negotiation simulation.
3. Recognize the interaction between early settlers and indigenous people in the U.S. Experience negotiating skills through a treaty negotiation simulation

**Introduction/Anticipatory Set:** Ask students: Why the early Americans wanted to expand west? Create a class dialogue of possible reasons. Next ask them how they would feel if one day someone decided to tear down their house and build a new for their family. – Discuss responses.

Activity 1: As a class analyze the possible reasons why people wanted to move west. Then discuss any conflicts or problems that could occur from expansion; Native Americans being the biggest conflict.

Activity 2: Create a list, as a class, why conflicts between the settlers and Natives occurred.

Activity 3: Have students brainstorm on solutions to these problems and conflicts.

Activity 4: Discuss the importance of culture for both Native Americans and the White Settlers.

Activity 5: Have students get back into their research groups. Pass out a copy of a treaty the US government made with the tribes. Each group needs to analyze the treaty looking for the effects on the natives as well as Settlers. (Small group discussion)

Activity 6: Put the students in research groups -- (3-4 students per group) -- have each group research a tribe in Minnesota. They should look into the culture of the tribe and the treaties that the U.S. government made with them in the 1800's.

As a class sum up the small groups findings. – Is there a pattern? Can the students speculate what might come next?

**Activity: Treaty Negotiation Simulation:**

1. Divide the class into three groups: Settlers and Indian Agent and a Native American tribe.
2. Each group must decide what their needs are within the treaty. Ask each group to decide five key points they would emphasize in their treaty negotiations.
3. Each side must negotiate through the Indian Agent to try to reach an agreement
4. Once the treaties are negotiated, written, and signed, display them around the classroom for students to view.
5. At the end of the class, discuss the outcome

**Summary/Conclusion:**

The students will be able to link the historical outcome of the treaties with the attitudes and feelings the Native Americans have towards the US government today.

Conduct a debriefing and a written exercise regarding the dynamics of negotiations, personal feelings regarding the outcome of the treaty, and how the historical events might influence Native American attitudes today.

## For Further Reading

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### Websites

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