

The Fur Trade in Wisconsin

Prepared by Ava L. McCall



Native people hunted animals for food and clothing.

Before the fur trade, Native people in Wisconsin met their needs for food and clothing by fishing, hunting, gathering, and growing food. They hunted animals for food and used their skins and furs for clothing. Native people only took animals they needed to survive.



French fur traders offered metal pots, tools, trade guns, traps, and beads to Native people and asked for animal pelts from Native people.

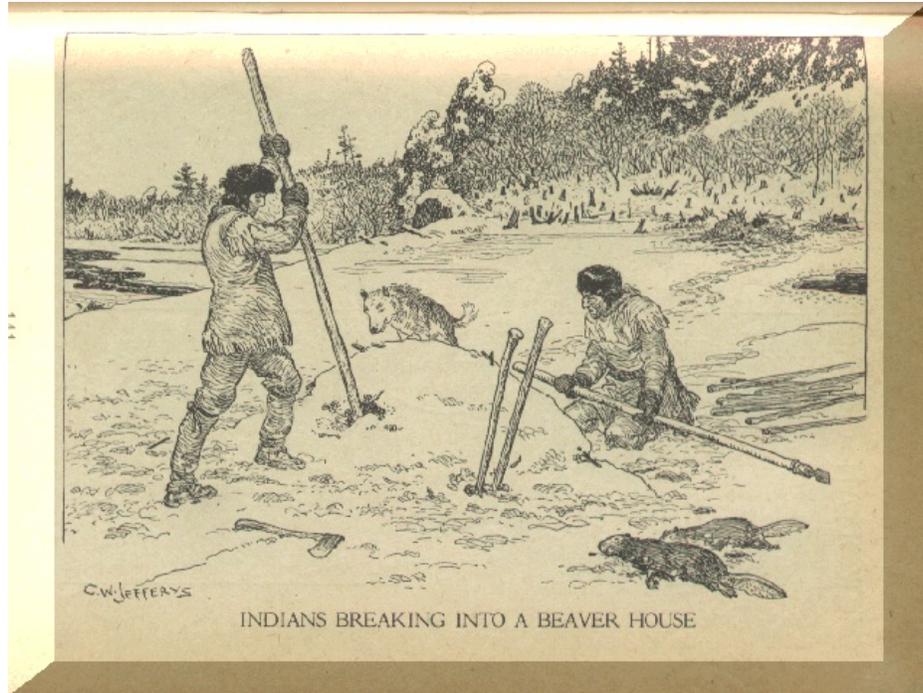


Native people had beaver pelts to trade for French trade goods.



European beaver hat

The fur trade began when French fur traders asked Native people to accept French goods for Native people's animal pelts. French fur traders wanted beaver pelts to make into warm hats.



The fur trade caused Native people to hunt and trap many beaver, mink, and otter to trade for French trade goods. After a time, Native Americans had a harder time finding beaver.

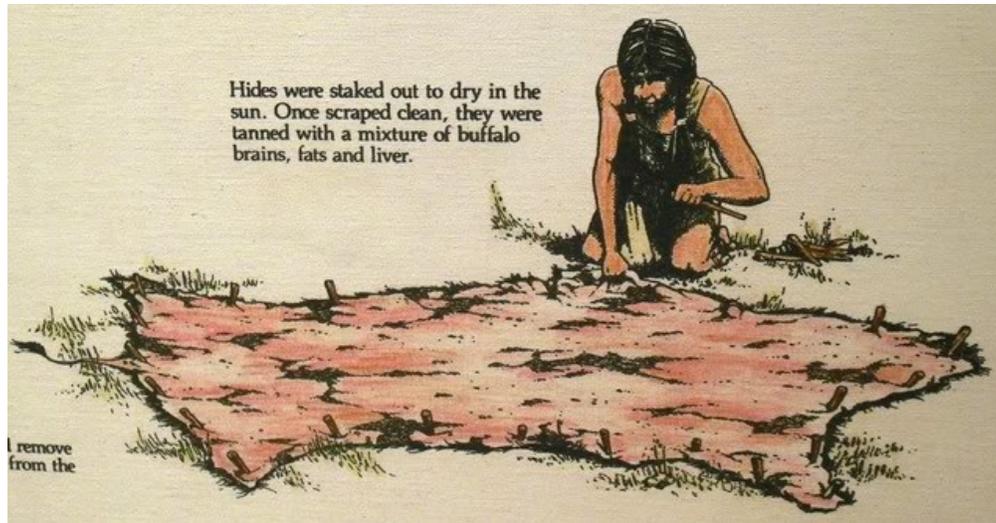


Metal trap received from French fur traders



Trade gun received from French fur traders

Native men spent more time away from families hunting and trapping for furs. Sometimes they moved into other Native people's hunting areas, which led to conflicts between Native nations. They had less time for tending crops, fishing, and gathering wild rice. Native people received trade guns and iron traps from French fur traders. These helped Native men become better hunters and trappers.



Native women growing food.

Native women spent more time preparing animal pelts for trade and taking care of family while the men were away hunting and trapping. Women had to repair their houses, grow crops, and gather firewood.



Metal cooking pot from French fur traders



Birchbark basket or cooking pot

Native people used metal cooking pots received from trade. It was easier to cook with metal pots than use the clay or birchbark pots they made. Native people made fewer birchbark and clay pots.



Iron axes from French fur traders



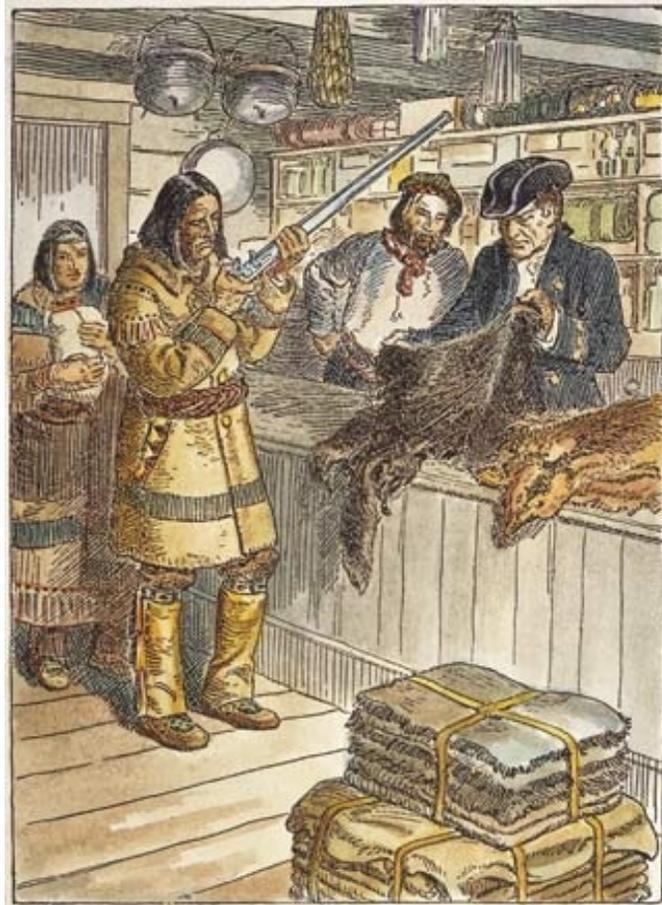
Steel knives from French fur traders

Native people used iron axes and steel knives received from trade. These tools made hunting, scraping furs, and farming easier. Native people stopped making stone tools.



Trade cloth from French fur traders

Native people used woolen cloth received from trade to make some of their clothes. They no longer needed to make all of their clothes from animal hides and furs. Native people used more of their hides and furs to trade with French fur traders.



Native people came to depend on the fur trade economy to obtain all the goods they needed to live. They changed their lifestyle to hunt and trap more animals than they needed to live. French fur traders made money by selling animal pelts received through trade to people who made clothing and hats in Europe.



French fur traders used birch bark canoes to travel rivers and lakes.

Native people taught European fur traders to make birchbark canoes for traveling by rivers and the Great Lakes. Native people continued to use birchbark canoes for traveling themselves.



When Native men spent much of their time hunting and trapping animals, their families lived in small groups rather than large villages.

As more and more Native nations traded with French fur traders, they moved from larger villages to smaller bands or groups of Native people. When they lived in smaller groups, Native men could track game and harvest pelts better and faster. Over time, there were very few beaver left.



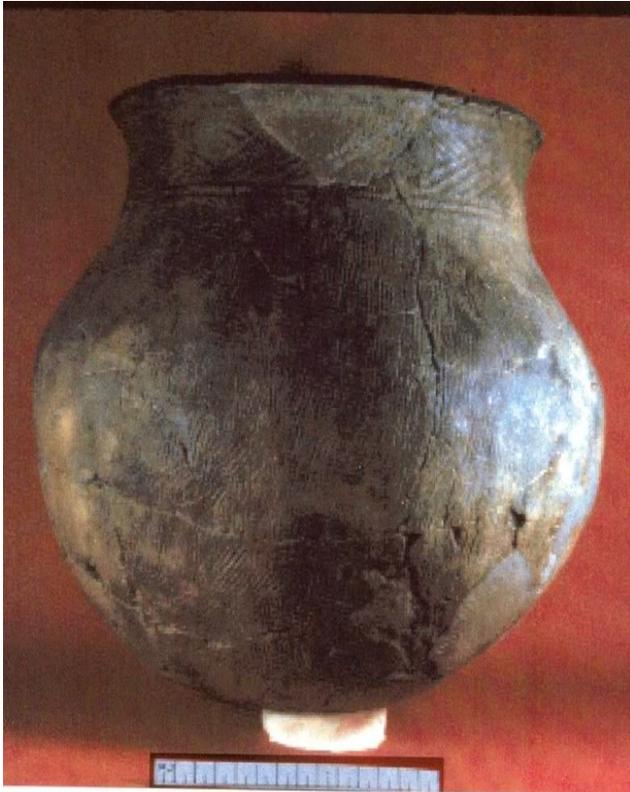
Ojibwe and Potawatomi women sometimes married French fur traders and their children were “Metis” or mixed because they came from both cultures.

Some Ojibwe and Potawatomi women married French fur traders. Their children were “Metis” or of mixed heritage. The children learned both French and Native languages and cultures. The Metis families became leaders in trading centers on Madeleine Island, Green Bay, and Prairie du Chien.



Most Native people helped the French during the French and Indian War.

Most Native people in Wisconsin got along well with French fur traders and helped them during the French and Indian War from 1756 through 1763. During this war, the British and French fought for control of the fur trade. When the French lost the war, Native people had to trade with the British.

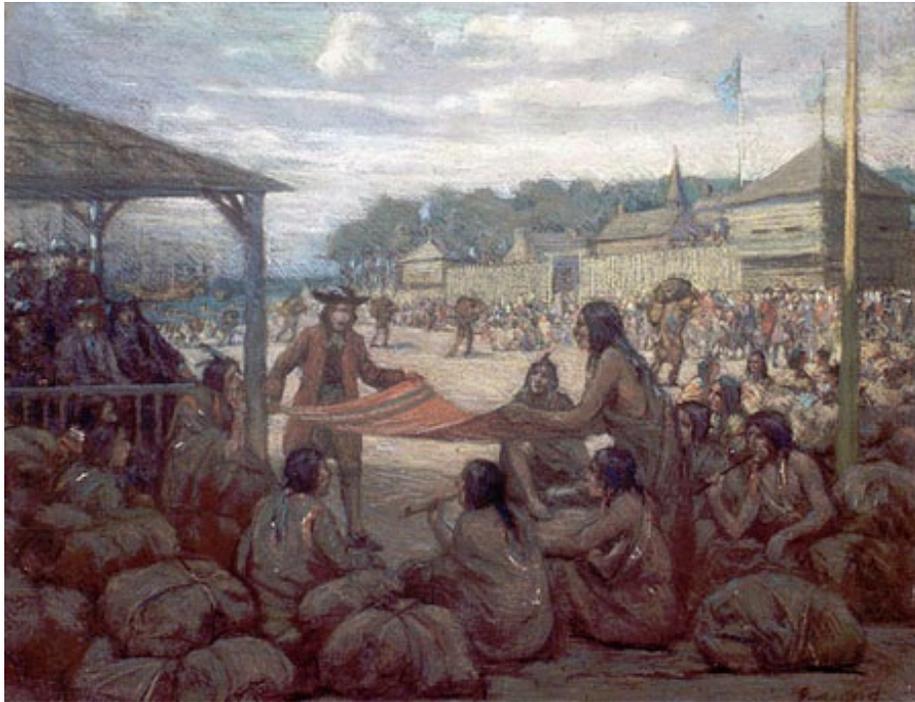


Native people stopped making clay pots during the fur trade.



Native people began using only metal pots during the fur trade.

After the British gained control of the fur trade, most Native people stopped making traditional clay pots and stone tools and used metal pots and tools received from trade.



Native people had to come to a fort to trade with British traders. They did not receive all the trade goods they wanted.

British traders did not give gifts, ammunition to use with guns, traps for hunting, or food during harsh winters to Native people like the French fur traders did. British traders raised prices and limited the supply of gun ammunition they traded with Native people. British traders also wanted Native people to come to a fort to trade. Most Native people, except for the Menominee and Ho-Chunk, did not want to trade with British traders.



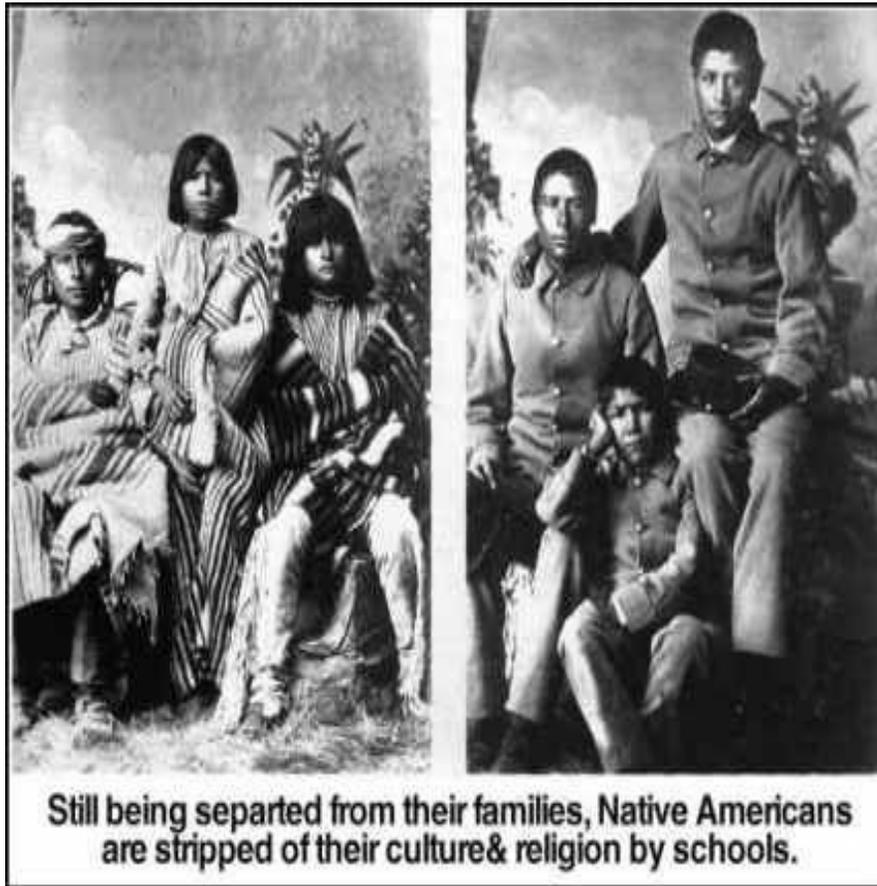
Most Native people sided with the British during the American Revolution.

Later British traders changed their trading practices and gave Native people gifts and sold guns and gun ammunition to them. Most Native people sided with the British during wars with the American colonists in the 1700s and 1800s. Native people hoped the British would stop American settlers from moving further west onto their lands.

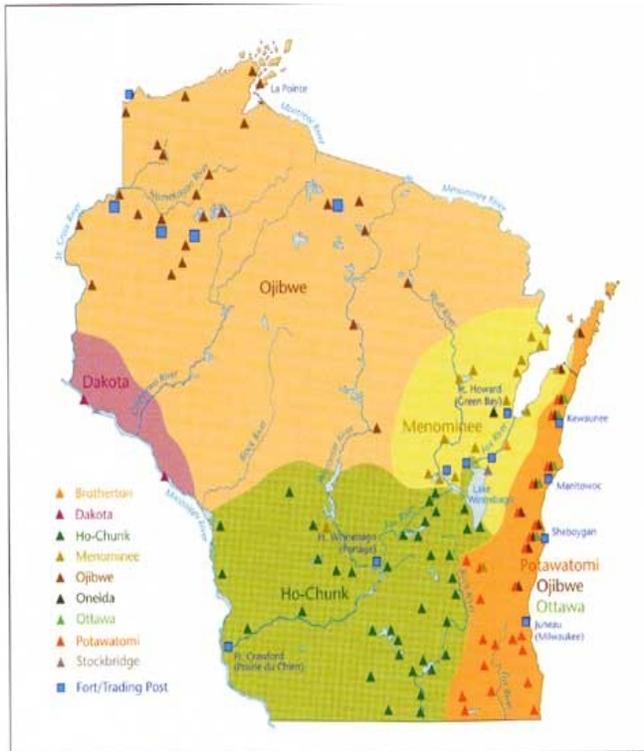


War of 1812 re-enactment at Villa Louis in Prairie du Chien

The United States and Great Britain fought a war to decide who was going to control the fur trade. The war was called the War of 1812. It began in 1812 and ended in 1815. The United States won the war and control of the fur trade. Native people had to adjust to trade with the United States government during the fur trade.

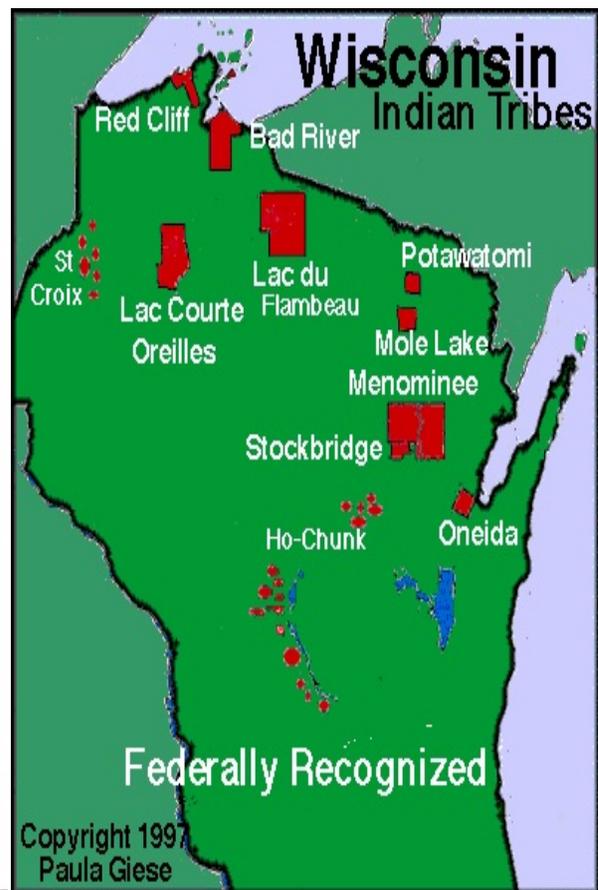


Many Native people did not like the way the United States government treated them. The United States government tried to make Native people more like Europeans and prevent Native people from trading with French or British traders.



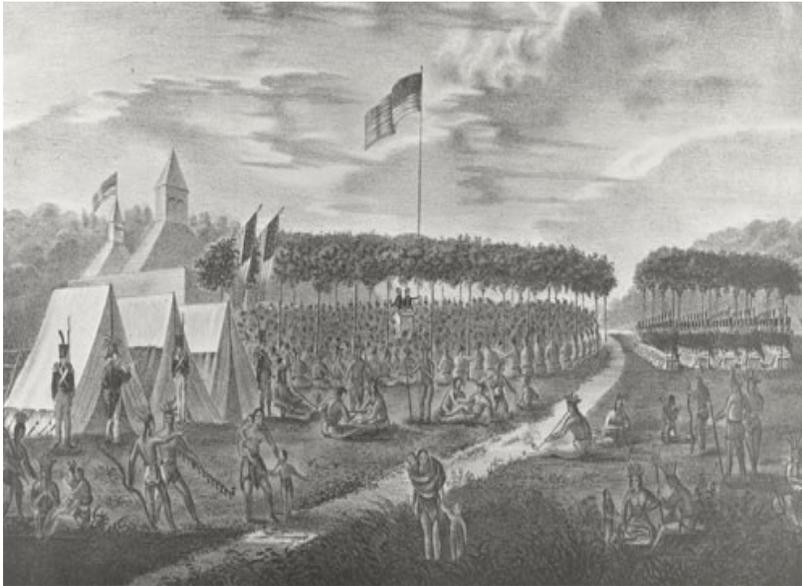
NATIVE-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT
IN WISCONSIN, C. 1830.

Location of Wisconsin Native nations in 1830



Location of Wisconsin Native nations in 1997

The United States government wanted Native people's land for Europeans and European Americans to live on. In the 1830s, Native people signed treaties with the United States government giving up most of their land.



Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1825

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME
OF
YOUR OWN
EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE
POSSESSION
WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED GRAZING AGRICULTURAL
IRRIGABLE DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre	Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 350,000 ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for holder, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent, U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Chico	KENTUCKY: Boone	MICHIGAN: East Troy	NORTH DAKOTA: Devils Lake Agency	VERMONT: Fort Spaulding
ILLINOIS: Cairo Agency	KENTUCKY: Cave Agency	MINNESOTA: Casselton	OHIO: Eastern	WASHINGTON: Fort Spokane
INDIANA: Mott	KENTUCKY: Mott	MISSOURI: Casselton	OREGON: Eastern	WISCONSIN: Dodge
MISSOURI: Mott	KENTUCKY: Mott	NEBRASKA: Casselton	UTAH: Eastern	
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WALTER L. FISHER, Secretary of the Interior ROBERT G. VALENTINE, Commissioner of Indian Affairs

After Native people signed treaties with the United States government, the government sold land to Europeans and European Americans.

The treaties were unfair to Native people. They were written in English which Native people could not read. The treaties forced Native people to give up their land when they did not believe anyone could own land. Treaties also were discussed with Native people who were not the true leaders of their nation.