



# **The Menominee Nation of Wisconsin**

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Based on *Native People of Wisconsin* by Patti Loew

# Menominee Tribal Tradition



The Menominee believe they were created at the end of the Menominee River (marked with a star).

The Menominee believe they always lived in Wisconsin. They believe they were created at the mouth or the end of the Menominee River.



Menominee fished



Menominee harvested wild rice



Menominee gathered maple sap



Menominee caught sturgeon

The Menominee got different food each season. In the summer, they fished and hunted for food. They gathered roots, berries, and nuts and planted gardens. At the end of summer, they harvested wild rice from lakes. In the spring, the Menominee collected maple sap and made maple sugar. They also caught sturgeon, a very large, old fish. In the winter, they ate food they stored in the summer.

# Menominee Tribal History



French fur traders took furs from the Menominee



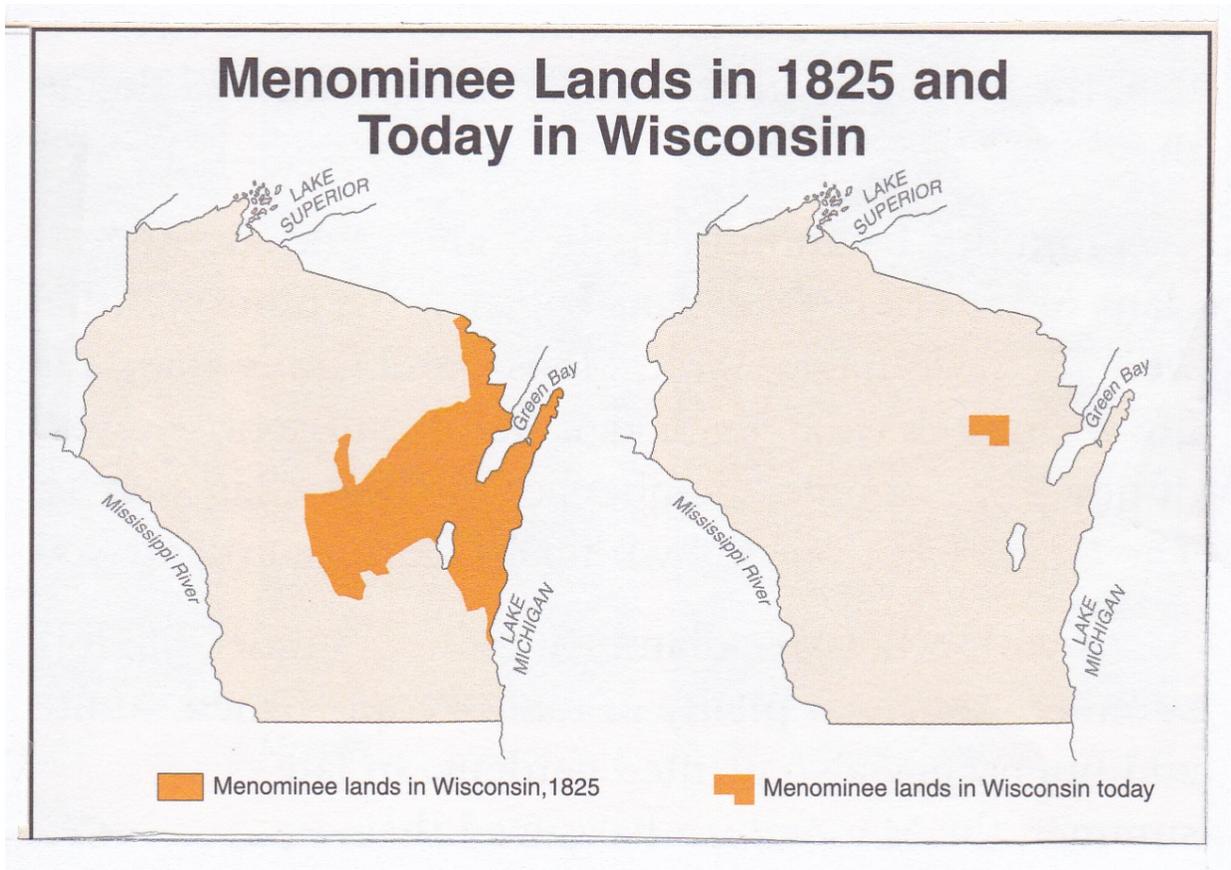
French fur traders offered metal tools and glass beads to the Menominee

In the 1600s, the Menominee traded beaver pelts for metal pots, guns, and knives from French fur traders. Menominee men spent more and more time away from their families to hunt and trap for furs to trade. The Menominee stopped making clay pots and stone tools.



The Menominee helped the British when they fought with the Americans.

During the American Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the Menominee helped the British when they fought the United States, but the British did not win either war. The Menominee now had to deal with the United States government instead of the British or the French fur traders.



The Menominee reservation today is in Keshena, Wisconsin.

The United States government asked the Menominee to give up land to allow Native people from New York and European settlers to live in Wisconsin. Between 1832 and 1848, the Menominee were forced to sell almost 10 million acres of land. Part of the land was for the New York Native people, but most of it was for European settlers.



Place of Menominee reservation in Wisconsin

The Menominee signed a treaty or agreement with the United States government to allow them to have a reservation in northern Wisconsin. Their reservation had a thick forest and the Wolf River.



Menominee took care of their forests so they always had mature trees to cut for lumber.

The Menominee caught sturgeon in the Wolf River. They cut only the mature or fully grown trees in the forest and left the young trees to grow larger. The Menominee cut only one part of the forest at a time so they always had trees to cut. They developed a successful lumber business.



Menominee children went to government boarding schools where they were made to become more like European Americans.

The United States government wanted the Menominee to become like European settlers. They sent some Menominee children to government boarding schools on the reservation, other places in Wisconsin, and other places in the United States. The Menominee children were not allowed to speak their native language or practice their customs. Most of these boarding schools were closed in 1934.

## The Termination Act of 1953

- The most controversial governmental policy toward reservation life
- It reduced costs and ignored individual needs
- Federal services were stopped immediately
- The effect of the governmental order was disastrous
- In 1975, the government resumed the services

The United States government wanted to get rid of the Menominee reservation to force the Menominee to become more like Europeans. The government decided to terminate the reservation so they would not have to protect the Menominee and their property. When the Menominee reservation was terminated, the Menominee people were hurt. They spent a lot of money to provide all the roads, schools, courts, and parks needed for the reservation to become Menominee County.



Legend Lake

Some people who were not Menominee but helped to govern the Menominee decided to sell land around Legend Lake. The lake was on the Menominee reservation before it was terminated. The Menominee people did not want land sold around their lake. Finally, in 1969, the United States government restored the Menominee reservation.

# Menominee Life Today



Menominee Tribal Clinic



Today the Menominee make money from their casino and forest business. They built a new health clinic and schools. They created their own college.



Menominee powwow

The Menominee continue to celebrate their culture through powwows. Women, men, and children dress in special powwow clothing and dance. Powwows are a time for Menominee families and friends to get together.

## Interesting Facts about the Menominee



Chief Oshkosh was one of the leaders of the Menominee people. The city of Oshkosh, Wisconsin was named after him.



Today the Menominee have an award-winning forestry business. They use sustainable forestry practices, which means they take only a certain number of trees each year to make sure they have trees to cut in the future.