

*Local History 101: Making Life-Changing Decisions in the Kankakee River Valley*

*Episode 1: Potawatomi Peril (to 1838)*

Dr. James Paul's Narrative with Slides



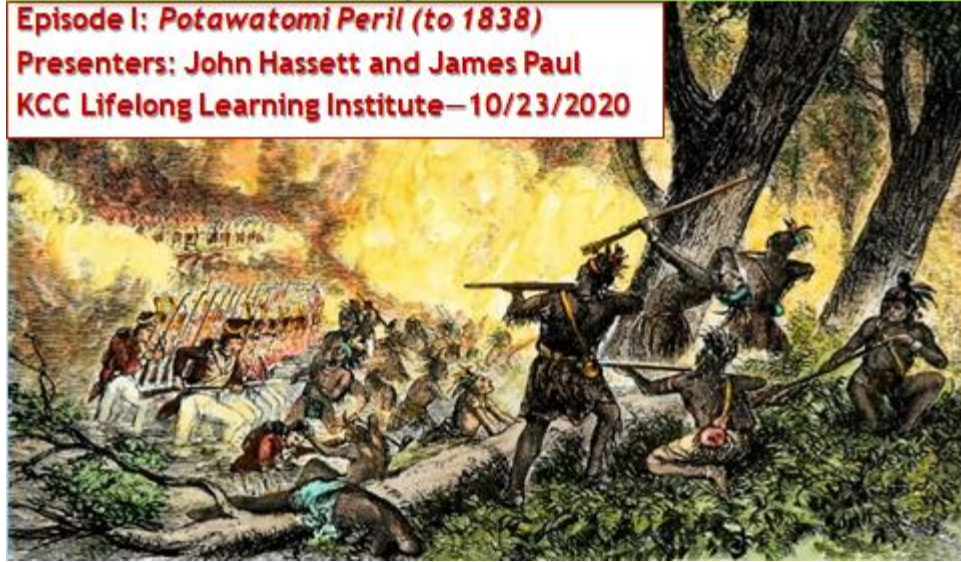
1. Hello, my name is Dr. Jim Paul. John was so debonair in his suit and derby hat as he, and other Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members who wore 19th century clothing, greeted guests to the gardens of the Letourneau Home/Museum. It was late June 2013, and the event was "Remembering Bourbonnais Grove: 1832-75" on the Sunday ending the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival. We were photographed after my portrayal of George Letourneau and no longer wearing my fake beard.

John grew up near Kankakee River State Park. As a boy, he explored the former Potawatomi village nearby. He was impressed with their local contributions and burial mound. He studied Potawatomi history throughout his life. John and I planned to team teach this course, but now I will present it by myself as tribute to him.

There are two parts to this course presentation: 1) the Potawatomi conflict and crises to 1838, and 2) the Potawatomi interaction with Noel LeVasseur.

**\* Local History 101: Making Life-Changing Decisions in the Kankakee River Valley  
\*Webinar Purpose and Procedure**

**Episode I: Potawatomi Peril (to 1838)  
Presenters: John Hassett and James Paul  
KCC Lifelong Learning Institute—10/23/2020**



2. The first part of this course presentation, to slide 55, is based on John's fall 2019 Lifelong Learning Institute course entitled "Potawatomi Flashback—A Life Long Learner's View". Since he and I had team taught several travelogues for the Lifelong Learning Institute, we decided to team teach this history course by combining his Potawatomi narrative with my insights into Noel LeVasseur's life with the Potawatomi. We considered this course to be the first in a series of courses entitled *Local History 101: Making Life-Changing Decisions in the Kankakee River Valley*. The next course in the series, Episode 2, will be entitled "Antebellum Abolitionists: the Quaker Durham's and their French-Canadian Friends (1838-60). It will convey the abolitionist sentiments of the Quaker family of Thomas and Margaret Durham and the attitude of the French-Canadian settlers toward slavery. Episode 3 is also in the planning stage—The Legacy of George Letourneau: from Bourbonnais and Kankakee Mayor to Illinois State Senator (1860-1906). Two more episodes for the future will be: Episode 4—The Durham-Perry Family: From Pioneer Settlers to Community Leaders (1906-1961); and Episode 5—The Perry Farm and Other Landmarks at the Crossroads: Commercialization or Preservation (1961 to present).

I plan to teach these courses in the near future. They will immerse course participants in the gut wrenching decisions of the individuals who lived in the Kankakee River Valley. The purpose of these course programs will be to engage the audience in a new way. The goal is not to have two levels of learning in the traditional two planes of narrator-audience, teacher-student, and presenter-audience, but to achieve one level in which all parties immerse themselves in the past. For example, during this course program, you will walk in the moccasins of the Potawatomi and I will become Noel LeVasseur. You will be compelled to make life-changing decisions in the 1830s.

## Pretend you are a Potawatomi: How would you react to the Indian Removal Acts (1830s)?

1. Move west of the Mississippi River onto land set aside beyond the current reach of white settlers.
2. Move west, but periodically travel many miles back to family homeland hunting and fishing areas in Illinois.
3. Resist and fight the outsiders initially, but if necessary, move west and periodically return to Illinois with limited or no rights, property, and prospects.
4. Assimilate with the white settlers through intermarrying and learning their culture.
5. Resist and possibly die in violent clashes with white settlers.

***\*Decide now--please pick a Potawatomi name for yourself and write down your life-changing decision before proceeding further.***

3. The first part of this course program, to slide 56, will consist primarily of John's narrative (and a few others), taking us through the history of the Potawatomi to the year 1838. During this journey, you the participant must pretend to be a Potawatomi and make a decision about the Indian Removal Acts of the 1830s in which the local Potawatomi were compelled to move west of the Mississippi River. Please pick a Potawatomi name for yourself and make your decision by choosing one of the answers provided here.

Please pick a number from one to ten. [Pause until the number is picked. Continue after everyone has picked her/his number.] The number you picked represents the person below that will walk with you on this journey. Please write her/his name below your life-changing decision's answer from the previous page. You will learn this person's fate at the end of the course.

1. Shabonee/Shabbona
2. Watchekee
3. Main Poc/Main Pouche
4. Mesawkequa
5. Billy Caldwell/Sauganash
6. Alexander Robinson/Chechepinquay
7. Catish
8. Mesheketeno
9. Tamin
10. Shawanasee

4. Please pick a number from one to ten. [Pause until the number is picked. Continue after everyone has picked her/his number.] The number you picked represents the person below that will walk with you on this journey. Please write her/his name below your life-changing decision's answer from the previous page. You will learn this person's fate at the end of the course.

There will be a ten minute intermission at slide 57. The second part of this course beginning with slide 58, will be your visit with Noel LeVasseur. You will first prepare a question for Noel LeVasseur on slide 56. Then, LeVasseur will appear when I put on this red *voyageur* hat. He will tell you a about his life to the year 1837.

Before your visit with Noel LeVasseur, you will learn the identity of the Potawatomi who traveled with you on this journey and determine how this person answered the life-changing question: How would you react to the Indian Removal Acts (1830s)? **What happened to this person as a result of her/his answer? How did her/his answer compare or contrast with your answer?**

Then, as a Potawatomi, you will have an opportunity to ask Noel LeVasseur a question when you visit him at his Bourbonnais Grove trading post in 1837. He will ask you what positive or negative things have you heard about him as an outsider? After LeVasseur leaves, you may ask any other questions of me. Please hold all questions until the question and answer session at the end of the course program. This course program will be digitally recorded so that it can be used for educational purposes.



## Ti-yar-ac-ke (Wonderful Land)--from Prehistory to the 1830s

### A Potawatomi speaks:



Indian Caves near Bourbonnais Creek's entrance to the Kankakee River.



Thomas and Margaret Durham's arrival in 1835—graphic art by Christina Bradley © 2020.



Elephant-like American mastodons once roamed the land of Ti-yar-ac-ke (the Kankakee River Valley) about 10,000 years ago. Sketch by James Paul © 2017.

5. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks about the years 1734-1834 and a more distant past: During the 100 circles of seasons before our Potawatomi people met outsiders like Noel LeVasseur and Thomas Durham, our people lived in Ti-yar-ac-ke [or Thea-ti-ki, “wonderful land”] with its river full of fish. We have many villages in Ti-yar-ac-ke, but those of us who first saw LeVasseur, the fur trader, and Durham, the Quaker, live in the village of Chief Me-she-ke-ten-o. When we met Durham at Twin Oaks where two oaks grow side by side, we traded a pony for his tired horse. We later met Durham’s squaw Margaret, and their children and built a wigwam of tree branches for them to use until their log cabin was built. We told LeVasseur and the Durhams the story of Ti-yar-ac-ke, a story that has been told to us by our ancestors.

Ti-yar-ac-ke was once covered by warm and shallow water with hard ridges breaking the surface [coral reefs]. There were many fish and other water creatures. Rocks [fossils] of these creatures can be found in the creek [Bourbonnais Creek] banks, and within 100 paces from the caves at the creek’s mouth [Indian Caves]. Underground rock is not far below Twin Oaks. A few openings to [sink] holes exist. They lead to openings made by running water.

An ocean of ice [glacier] once covered and flattened much of Ti-yar-ac-ke. One end of the ice ocean broke causing waters [Kankakee Torrent] to make the river and creeks of Ti-yar-ac-ke. These waters also made a large openness [prairie] on the sun rise side of the trail now called Bourbonnais Trace [Kennedy Drive], wet lands [prairie or marsh] on the sun set side of Bourbonnais Trace, and open land [prairie] with some trees, and then a line of trees next to the river.

Large creatures [mastodons] lived here during the ocean of ice time [ice ages]. Our ancestors came to Ti-yar-ac-ke while hunting these large animals. As the ice ocean slowly melted, the air became warmer and dryer. Large openness spread across the land. The big animals hunted by our ancestors were no more [the American mastodon became extinct about 10,000 years ago]. Our ancestors hunted, but they also fished, and picked fruits, nuts, berries and seeds of wild grasses. They stayed for short times on high land, and then followed herds of bison, caribou, and deer [these people were Paleolithic or Paleo-Indians].

The warming air and the spread of openness brought a new people to the rich lands. They were hunters who trailed herds of animals on their seasonal wonderings. [These people were known as Archaic and lived 8000-1000 B.C.E.]. They built lodging for hot times on wooded land and spent cold times in rock shelters or large caves like those at the mouth of the creek that flows into the Ti-yar-ac-ke. These people hunted and gathered food, yet found time to make many different types of weapons, tools, and trinkets. Later, another Woodland people came and built villages, made clay pottery, buried their dead in mounds, and made trinkets and tools. Two thousand circles of seasons ago, another group of ancestors called Mississippian, arrived and built huge spirit mounds and large villages along the river valleys on the sun set side of Ti-yar-ac-ke. Every one of these ancestral natives had bands that lived in the lands of Ti-yar-ac-ke.

[James Paul—“The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel” in *The Herald*, July 2017].

## Where did they come from?



\* Algonquin Family of three tribes in a long term alliance called the Council of the Three Fires: Potawatomi, Ottawa, and the Ojibwa (Chippewa).

\* They were driven westward and southward into the "Old Northwest" by the more war-like Iroquois who were able to obtain guns from Dutch Traders around 1600.



Map Illustration by James Paul

\* As they split geographically the Potawatomi continued to hold the council fires and so they became known as "The Keepers of the Fire".

*The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by Gordon Lightfoot--

"The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down, Of the big lake they called Gitche Gumee. The Lake it is said, never gives up her dead, When the skies of November turn gloomy."

6. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks about the centuries from 1300 to 1700:

Between 100 and 500 circles of seasons ago, our ancestors began to form tribes and occupied agreed upon land. The people in the river valleys toward the setting sun called themselves Inoca. The Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Peoria were also Inoca. We Potawatomi are not Inoca. We met outsiders like Pere Jacques Marquette, and voyageurs Louis Jolliet and Rene Robert Cavalier de LaSalle. These outsiders referred to the Inoca as the Illini or Illiniwek. At about that time, many of our Potawatomi ancestors lived on both sides of the great lake up-river from Ti-yar-ac-ke, but within 30 circles of seasons ago—their year 1730—one of our Potawatomi tribes found new hunting and planting grounds in Ti-yar-ac-ke. The Piankeshaws and the Miamis lived on the sun rise side of Ti-yar-ac-ke. Some Mohicans, Inoca, Chippewa, Ottawa, and Miami lived in Ti-yar-ac-ke before us.

[James Paul—"The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel" in *The Herald*, July 2017].

P.S. Iroquois County is the only county with that name in the United States. Tradition holds that a band of Iroquois were surprised and defeated by war party of the Illini on the banks the river now called the Iroquois River.

By 1670 Jesuit missionaries had visited the Potawatomi near Green Bay. In 1673-74, Father Jacques Marquette had passed through Green Bay. He died on May 18, 1675 near Ludington, MI. By 1679, LaSalle was buying furs from them in Wisconsin (with trade goods).

The May 15, 1673 feast at camp of Illinois near confluence of Iowa River and Mississippi River. Fr. Marquette speaks.



Starved Rock State Park  
Visitor Center

7. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks:

Our people met more outsiders called voyageurs—French travelers—including men in black robes who they called Jesuits. We liked to trade with them. [James Paul—“The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel” in *The Herald*, July 2017].

The trader, Louis Jolliet, joined Fr. Marquette’s expedition from St. Ignace on May 15, 1673. They traveled the waterways southwest to the Mississippi River. Near the confluence of the Iowa River with the Mississippi, they came upon a camp of the Illinois. They proceeded to attend a great feast:

. . .consisting of four dishes which had to be partaken of in accordance with all . . . The first course was a great wooden platter full of sagamite, that is to say meal of Indian corn boiled in water and seasoned with fat. The Master of ceremonies filled a spoon with sagamite three or four times and put it to my mouth as if I was a little child. He did the same to Monsieur Jolliet. As a second course, he caused a second platter to be brought on which there were three fish. He took some pieces of them, removed the bones thereupon, and after blowing on them to cool them, he put them in our mouths as one would give food to bird. For the third course, they brought a large dog that had just been killed; but when they learned we did not eat its meat, they removed it from before us. Finally, the fourth course was a piece of wild ox, the fattest morsels of which were placed in our mouths. [Fr. Jacques Marquette] (Balesi, p. 22).

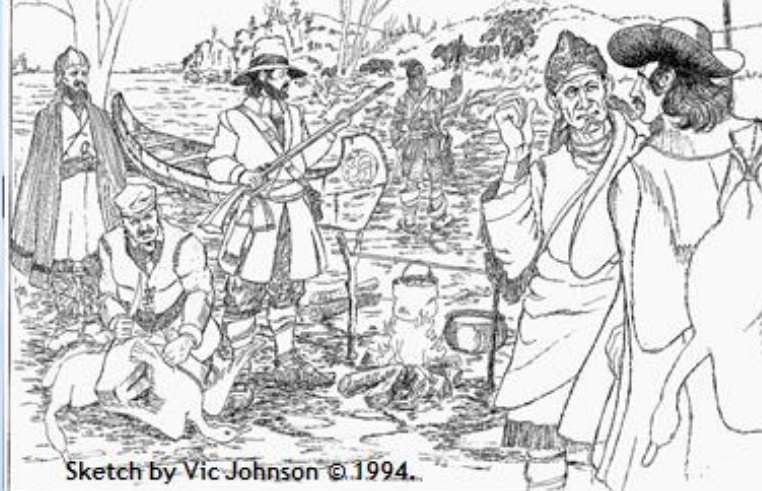


## Gougar's Grove Marquette Oak 1650-1920?



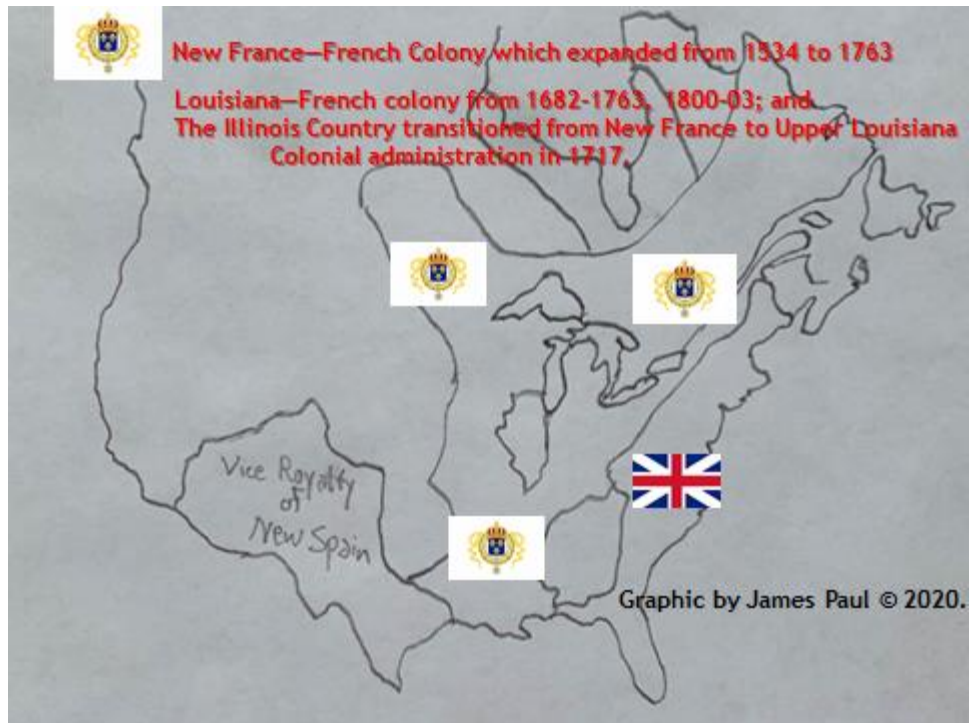
8. In declining health on his final voyage on the Illinois waterways in 1675, Fr. Marquette and his entourage canoed east along the Theakiki, portaged for five miles to the St. Joseph River (near South Bend, Indiana today) and then to Lake Michigan. He died along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan on May 18, 1675. Local folk lore claims that the Marquette Oak that once stood along the banks of the Kankakee River at Gougar's Grove near Baker's Creek between Aroma Park and Kankakee, was the site of Fr. Marquette's overnight encampment on his final journey in 1675.

In December 1679, Rene-Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle's group of explorers paddled their birch canoes down the Kankakee River—landing at a site near the present day Perry Farm. At that time, he named the river Seignelay in honor of colonial minister of France. The name was later changed to the Theatiki. The Potawatomi called the land adjacent to the river "Te-yar-ac-ke" ("wonderful land"). The word "Ky-an-ke-ke" evolved. Some Indian tribes called the land "Te-ok-e-kee" ("wolf") while some coureurs de bois used the name "Quin-que-que".



9. No additional narrative for this slide.





10. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks about the years 1734-1834:

Over the course of 100 circles of seasons while living in Ti-yar-ac-ke, we met outsiders who carried different cloths waving on poles—they called them flags. They often carried these cloths into battle against each other and sometimes against us. [James Paul—“The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel” in *The Herald*, July 2017].



11. No additional narrative for this slide.

## What were they like: Hunter/Gatherer/Horticulturists ?

- \* In their large summer villages the women raised corn, pumpkins, beans, peas, squash, melons and tobacco.
  - \* They also gathered nuts, roots, acorns, berries, and wild rice.
  - \* The men hunted, fished and sometimes raided the regions of other tribes.
  - \* In their smaller winter villages the men hunted and trapped elk, deer, bear, bison, beaver, muskrats, raccoons, mink, martens, etc.
  - \* So: They were Seasonally Nomadic
- ... Important



OSIWA TOWNS WIGWAM GATHERING WILD RICE  
From a painting by Seth Eastman, in front of House Committee on Military Affairs, Washington, D. C.

12. No additional narrative for this slide.

- \* Summer=large 1 or 2 family (polygamous) rectangular wigwams with high arched roofs w/elm or cedar bark.
- Winter=smaller domed oval wigwams that were more tightly constructed (for warmth).
- They sometimes had fires inside with an opening in the top (for warmth).



This rectangular wigwam is located at Isle a la Cache.



13. No additional narrative for this slide.

### Life in a Potawatomi wigwam

Made of sapling trees, bark, and other natural materials, a dome-shaped wigwam was home for one or two families. Step inside and take a look at the tools, clothes, and other items people needed every day. A Potawatomi family made nearly everything they needed, resourcefully using natural materials as well as supplies they acquired in trades.

**Potawatomi families adapted to the seasons**

In summer, they lived in riverbank villages they returned to year after year. There, they grew a wide range of crops. Many families could share a longhouse, similar in construction to the wigwam but longer and higher. Look for a longhouse outside the museum.

In winter, families spread out to smaller settlements with fewer people, near good hunting. They lived in smaller winter wigwams with fur for warmth.

**Building a Wigwam**

1. Sapling trees are cut and peeled of bark. The saplings are then woven together to form a dome shape.

2. The saplings are then covered with bark and other natural materials.

3. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

4. The wigwam is then painted with natural pigments.

5. The wigwam is then decorated with carvings and paintings.

6. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

7. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

8. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

9. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

10. The wigwam is then finished with a layer of mud or clay.

Step inside and explore this Potawatomi wigwam.

Graphics and wigwam are at Isle a la Cache.



14. No additional narrative for this slide.





15. No additional narrative for this slide.

Most of their clothing was made of deerskin and they also used bison and bearskin robes until they began to trade with the French and British for textiles.

Women usually had long hair and a single braid, while men had long hair except when "on the warpath"----- when warriors shaved their heads except for a scalp lock which was adorned with an Eagle feather and a "roach" made of deer or porcupine fur. Warriors usually wore red and black paint as well.



16. No additional narrative for this slide.

In the 1700s the French changed their culture forever as they robustly invaded the Indian lands with trade goods from the north and east (by way of Mackinac and Detroit). The French were mainly "Voyageurs" seeking pelts for Europe's markets and the Indians wanted clothing, pots & other metal objects, guns, powder, etc

These graphics are at *Isle a la Cache.*

*What were the going rates for goods?*

*With 1 pelt to trade, choose from:*

10 earrings	30 musket balls
25 needles	1 silver cross

*With 2 pelts to trade, choose from:*

1 cotton shirt
1 axe
2 yards of cloth

*With 3 pelts to trade, choose from:*

1 small blanket	1 silver armband
1 tin kettle	10 strands of glass beads
3 gallons of rum	

*Other types of fur had value too.*

1 beaver pelt = 10 muskrat pelts or 2 deer pelts or 2 skunk pelts
2 beaver pelts = 1 otter pelt or 1 bear pelt

17. No additional narrative for this slide.





18. This French 18<sup>th</sup> century map indicates the rivers “Theakiki” (spelled with two K’s), Iroquois, and St. Joseph. The French phrase *Pays Des* means “Land of”.

*The fur trade changed the world*

By the time the fur trade began to decline in the 1800s, it had brought staggering changes to North America and altered worldwide political and economic power. The fur trade had an impact on cultures, animals, environments, continents, and the course of world history.

Big effect on both the French and American Traders and the Native Americans!!!!!!

19. No additional narrative for this slide.

**The “Fox Wars”**

- \* The 1700-1701 treaty stopped the Iroquois from attacking.
- \* Then the Fox tribe began attacking the Potawatomi and the French traders in Wisconsin and Michigan.
- \* 1712-1715-The Potawatomi (empowered by French guns and their French “Brothers in Arms”) began to attack the Fox and their allies.
- \* In 1718 the French built Fort St. Joseph to protect the portage but their jurisdiction switched from Canada to Louisiana.
- \* In 1722 Fox surrounded Illini at “Starved Rock”-surrendered 80 women and children.
- \* Finally in 1730, 1400 French troops from Fort Chartres and Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Mascouten, Illini, Sacs, and Miami warriors slaughtered 200-300 Fox warriors and countless women and children in McClean Co.

20. No additional narrative for this slide.



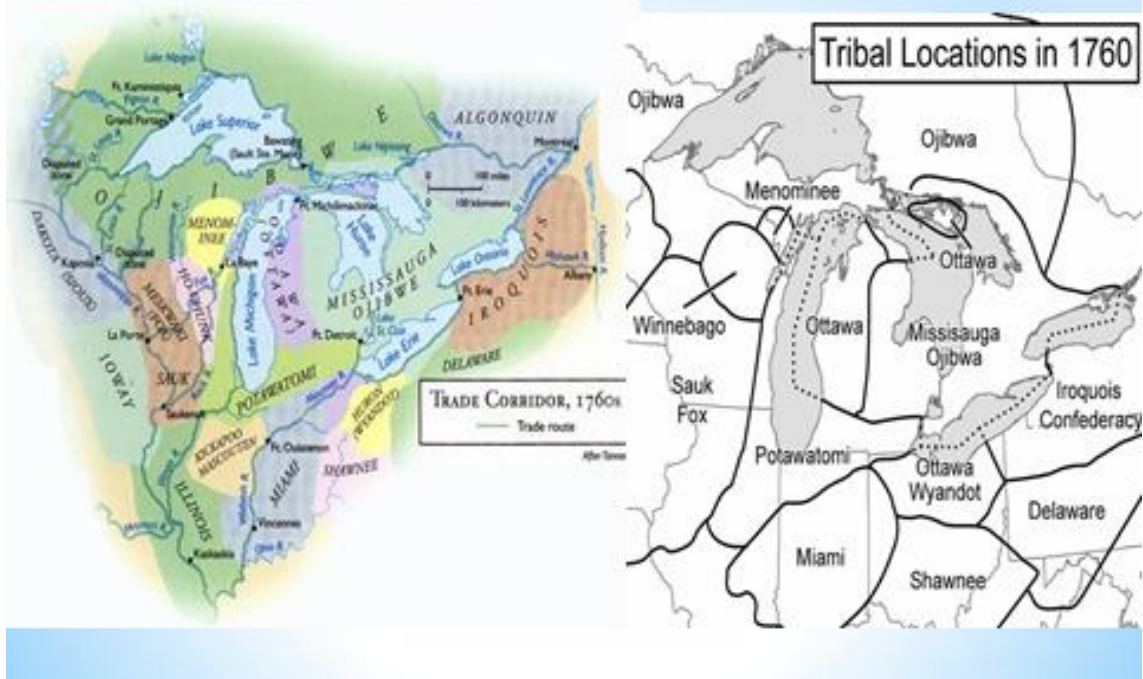
21. No additional narrative for this slide.



22. No additional narrative for this slide.



In the 1740s-1750s, the Potawatomi spread south and west into Illinois.



23. No additional narrative for this slide.

\* By the 1740s the fur trade again flourished but British traders began moving into the Old Northwest Territory from the South and East.



Map illustration by James Paul

\* In the 1750s the Potawatomi again supported the French against the British (unfortunately some warriors brought smallpox back to their villages during the winter of 1757-58). Unfortunately after the French lost Quebec and Montreal in 1760 the French and Indian War was lost and the British traders pushed into the region at Detroit.

\* When the British occupied Fort Chartres in southern Illinois many of the French moved across the river to Spanish Louisiana helping to form St. Louis. . .

\* In the 1760s a famous Ottawa by the name of Pontiac, led an uprising against British stinginess. . . and many British traders lost their lives and their goods.

\* In 1769 Pontiac was assassinated (while drunk) in Cahokia sparking a Second Starved Rock story in which Most of the Peoria (Illini) were killed there by other tribes (including Potawatomi)-only about 10 survived and escaped to the south.

24. No additional narrative for this slide.

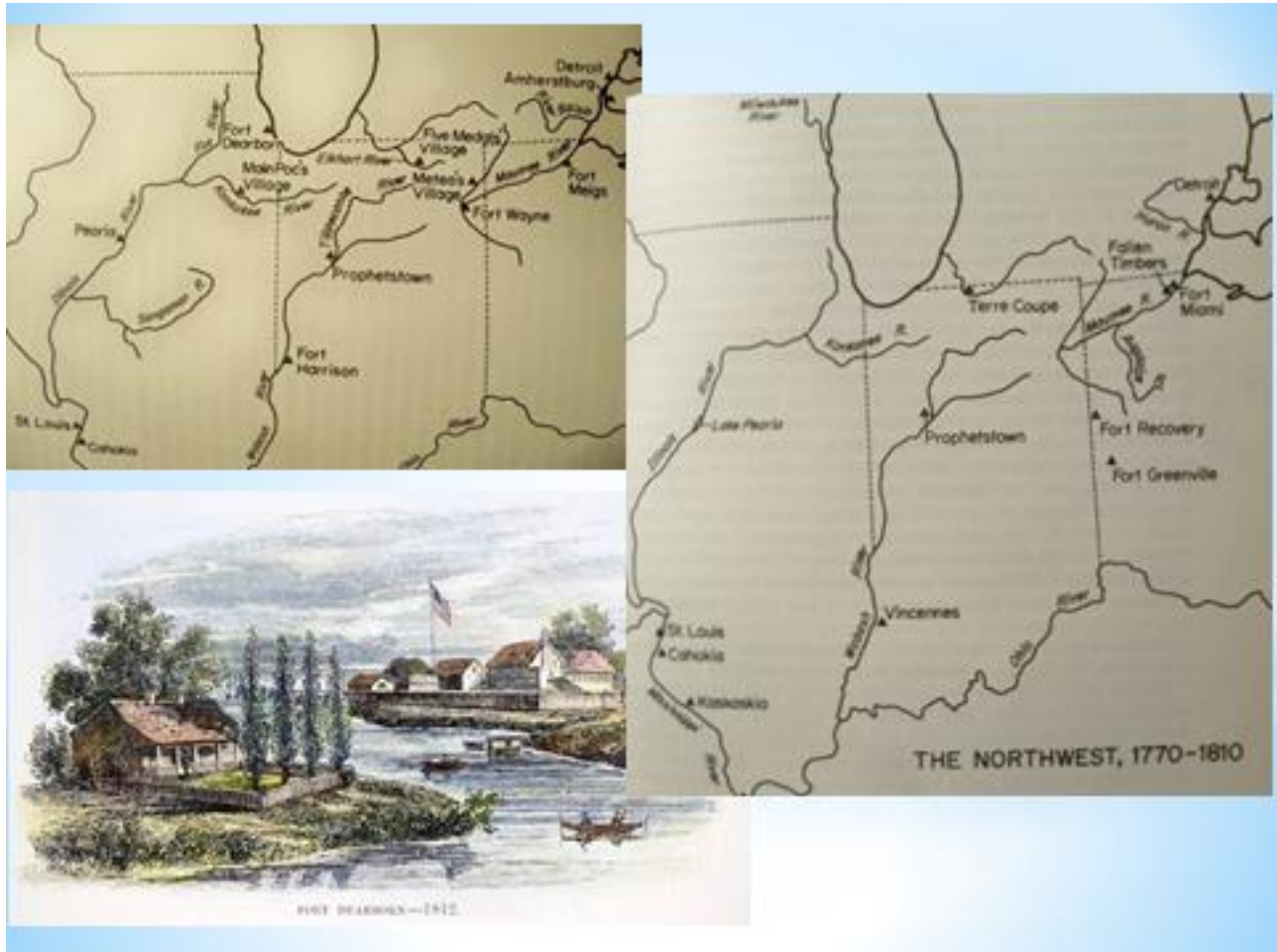


\* Between 1770-1790, some of the Eastern Potawatomi attacked settlers along the Ohio River. The Westward Settling Americans complained to Virginia's governor Patrick Henry. George Rogers Clark and 175 men took Fort Kaskaskia and occupied Cahokia. Finally in 1794 Major General "Mad" Anthony Wayne launched a campaign against the tribes (which were supported by the British) until they were defeated at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on the Maumee River.



\* More smallpox in some IL villages.

25. No additional narrative for this slide.



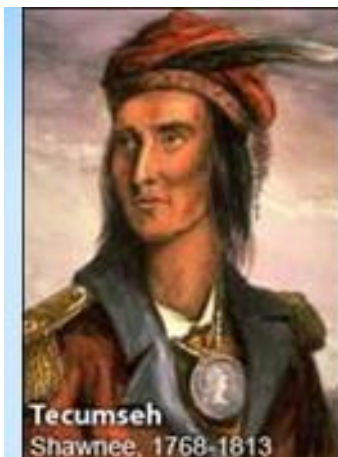
26. Please note the names of all the rivers, forts, Native American villages, and white settlers' towns on these maps





- \* 1805—Main Poc attacks Osage Village—kills 34 women and children and captures 60 more. It was November so most of the warriors were away hunting. . .
- \* As the fur trade declined and hunting became less productive, some of the Potawatomi tried farming (with the help of Quakers and other missionaries) with little success—Women.
- \* Some chiefs visited Washington and Philadelphia and began to see their time left in dominating the old Northwest was coming to an end.
- \* President Jefferson began the treaty process in which the Indians would trade their lands for money and trade goods (including food).
- \* By 1806 (after numerous problems with annuity payments, land sales corruption and the whiskey trade) many of the Potawatomi and other tribes began to follow Tenskwatawa—the Shawnee Prophet and his warrior brother Tecumseh: 1. Billy Caldwell (Sauganash) half Potawatomi (worked mainly as a trader and negotiator of treaties in Chicago and Peoria). 2. Shabbona (Burley Shoulders)—an Ottawa (an important chief in Northern IL until 1859).
- \* Main Poc—attacked Osages again in 1810 and white settlers south of Lake Peoria in 1811.
- \* He also recruited Sacs, Kickapoo, Ottawa, and Chippewa (and the British in Canada) but William Henry Harrison defeated the tribes and burned Prophetstown→War of 1812.

29. No additional narrative for this slide.



30. Shabonee/Shabonna (above) allied with Tecumseh during the War of 1812. The painting above is a glorified version of the Battle of Tippecanoe.



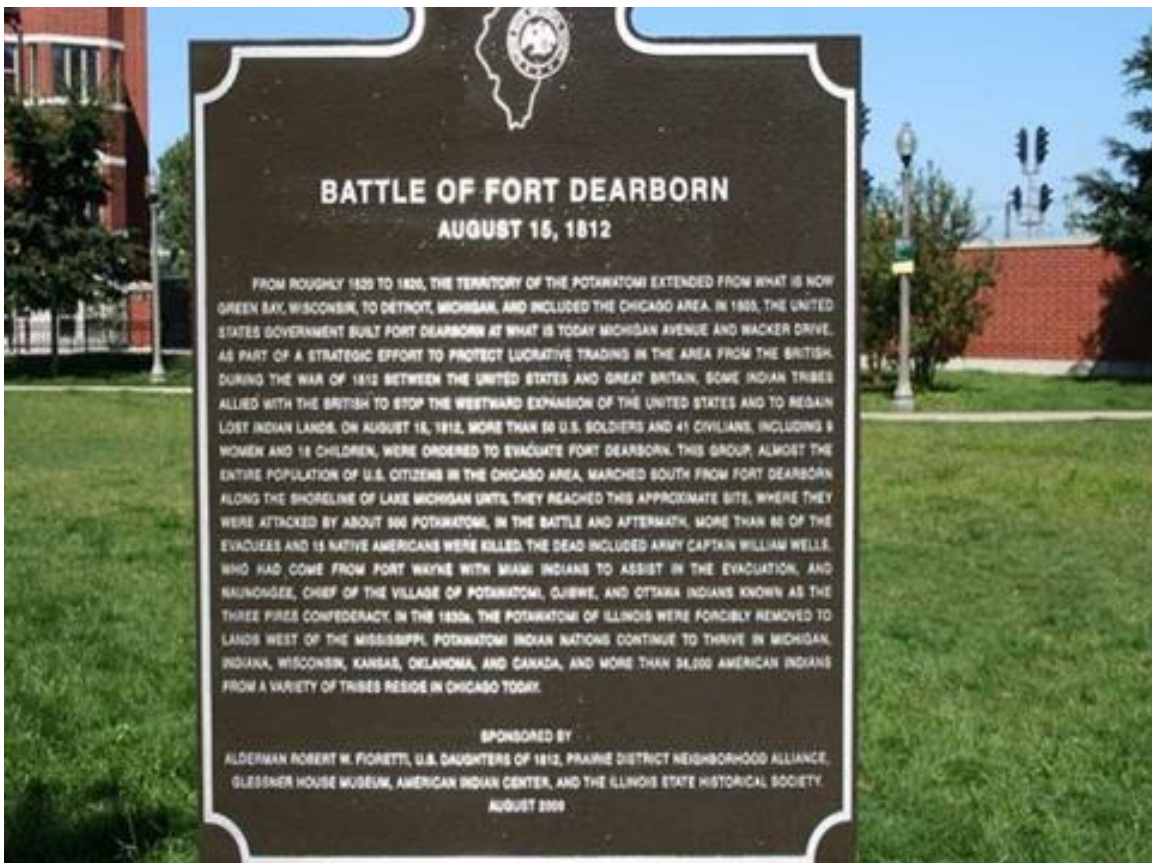


CAPTAIN HEALD IN COUNCIL WITH THE POTTAWATOMIES.



- \* In 1812 the Americans decided that Fort Dearborn was not going to stand up to a major Indian attack and decided to abandon the Fort.
- \* They were to distribute all of the trade goods to the neighboring Indians but they threw any excess weapons, powder, and especially whiskey down the well and marched south on August 14.
- \* They were attacked by about 500 angry Potawatomi and a few Kickapoo, Sacs, and Winnebagos about 1 and ½ miles south near Burnham harbor. (Edmunds, p. 187).
- \* Of the 54 Soldiers, 12 militia, 9 women, and 18 children, 53 were killed or wounded. Most of the survivors did not survive the next few days.
- \* 15 Potawatomi were killed.
- \* Notable exceptions: Captain Nathan Heald and his wife (though wounded) were later taken to the British at Mac kinac by Alexander Robinson and second in command Lt. Helm was ransomed at Lake Peoria. His wife and the Kinzie family were taken to Detroit after being saved by Black Partridge and Waubensee.
- \* Captain William Wells-blackened face-shot, heart cooked and eaten.

31. No additional narrative for this slide.



32. No additional narrative for this slide.



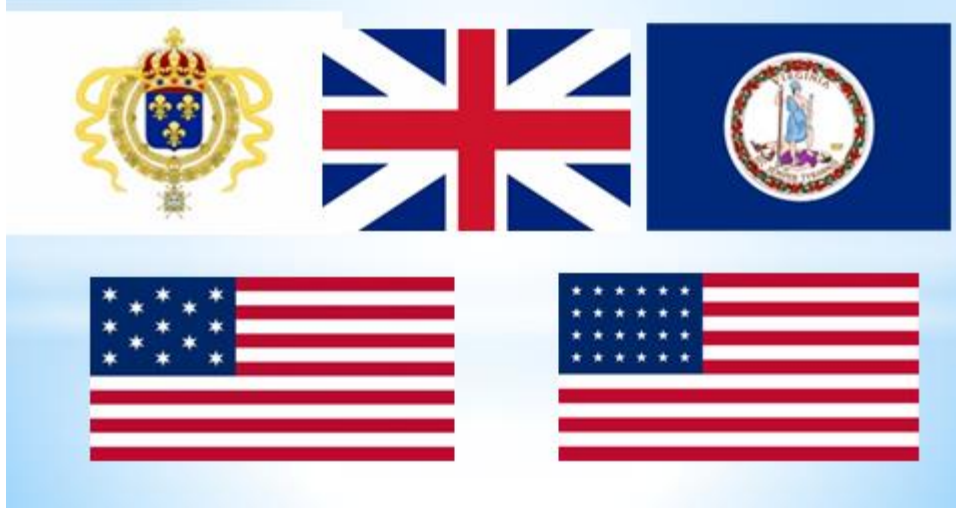
33. Here you see several artistic depictions of the Battle of Fort Dearborn.

- \* In 1813 after many more pitched battles throughout the old Northwest, William Henry Harrison attacked the British, Potawatomi, Winnebago, and Kickapoo on the Thames River in Ontario. The British surrendered and though Tecumseh was killed, Billy Caldwell and Shabbona returned to Illinois.
- \* After the defeat of the British, the Indians signed a peace treaty with the American's in 1815.
- \* American settlers and traders poured into the region and the tribes became increasingly indebted to the Indian agents/traders for trade goods (including food and whiskey).
- \* In 1816 the Potawatomi began to cede their lands to the government by signing the first of 28 different treaties (at St. Louis).
- \* They were promised cash annuities for a number of years and small tracts/reserves/reservations were awarded to particular villages or individuals.
- \* Many of the "mixed-bloods" (*metis*) associated with the tribes also were rewarded such as Billy Caldwell, Alexander Robinson, and the children of mixed marriages: Catish's offspring.

34. No additional narrative for this slide.



The flags that flew over the Kankakee River Valley during Potawatomi tenure are from left to right, top down: French Colony of New France (1543-1763); British Colony: Indian Reserve (1763-1778) and Province of Quebec (1774-78); Commonwealth of Virginia (1778-87); United States 13 stars (1787-95), and United States 24 stars (1822-36)—with 4 United States flags with 15, 20, 21, and 23 stars in between 1795-1822).



35. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks about the year 1823:

The men who wore black robes tried to “baptize” us. Few of us were interested in this strange religion because it went against our culture and beliefs. Near the St. Joseph River on the sun rise side, a new group called “Baptists” came to teach our people reading, writing, farming, and working inside the home. Some of these “Baptists” thought that we could be saved from the outsiders’ bad habits by moving us to the sun set side of the Mississippi River. They told this to their leaders, and those leaders agreed. The outsiders also wanted our land.

[James Paul—“The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel” in *The Herald*, July 2017].



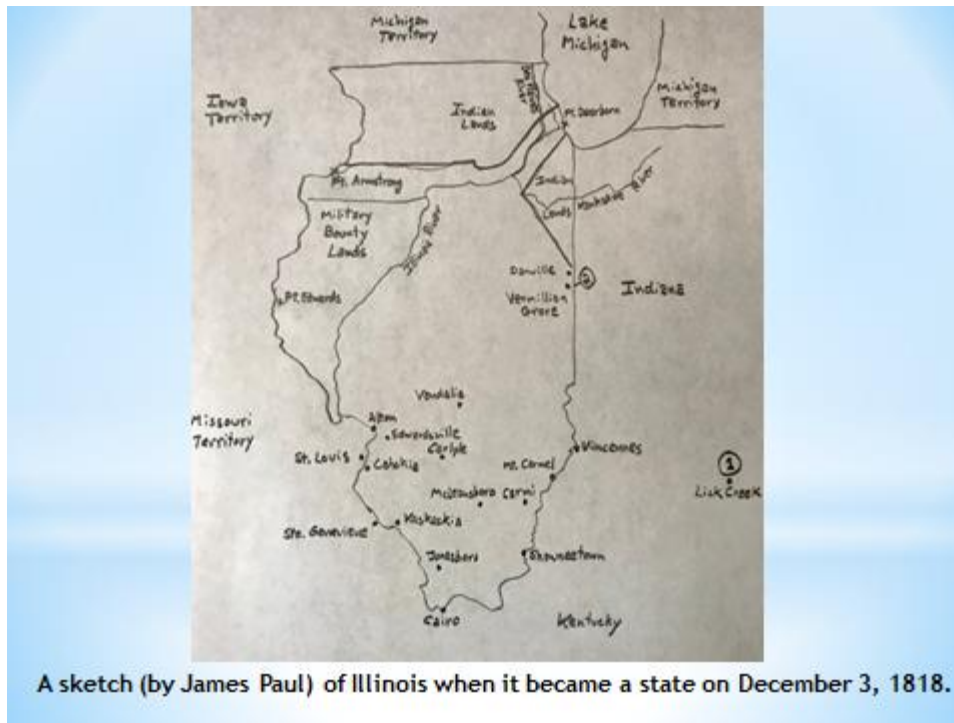


36. The area outlined in red (drawn by James Paul—2020) is the Illinois Territory from 1809 to 1818 when Illinois became a state. The following narration is from my article “April 1818: Potawatomi apprehensive about impending Illinois statehood” in the Village of Bourbonnais’s *The Herald* April 3, 2018 edition.

Like other Native Americans in the Illinois Territory, the Potawatomi of the Kankakee worried about their fate in the spring of 1818. This was the year that territorial legislators in the capitol at Kaskaskia had set for achieving statehood. In the eight months from April to December 1818, many issues had to be addressed. The legislators’ sights were not yet set specifically on the Potawatomi of the Kankakee, but how long would that last?

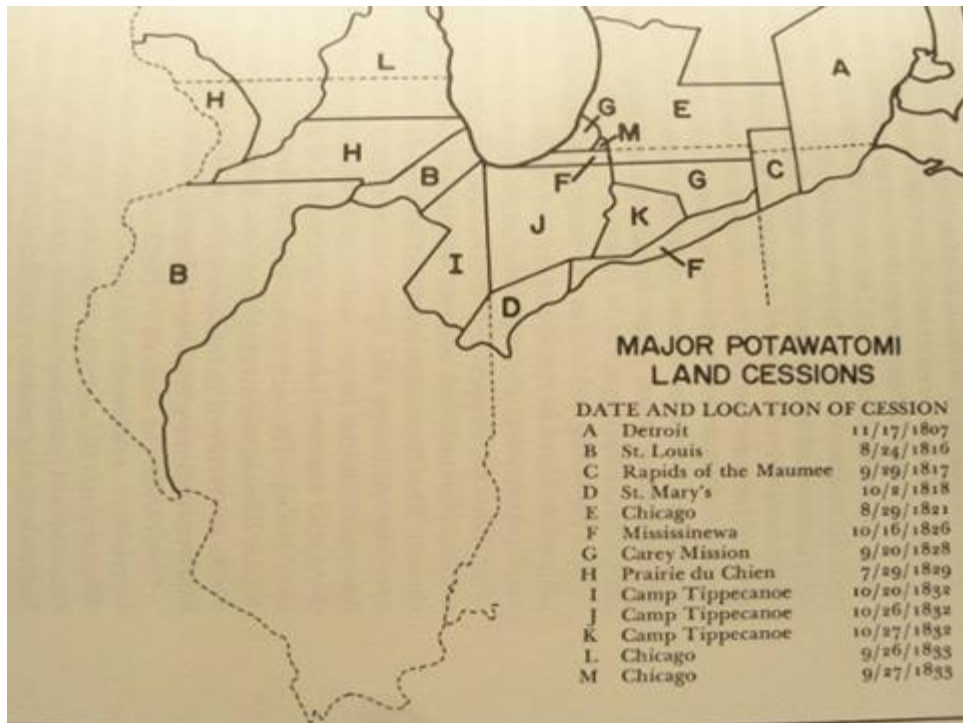
Nine years before Illinois statehood, the Illinois Territory was formed on April 28, 1809 out of the 1787 Northwest Ordinance’s westernmost lands. The territory consisted of today’s Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota’s east bank of the Mississippi River. President James Madison appointed the Kentuckian aristocratic lawyer, livestock farmer, and slave owner, Ninian Wirt Edwards, Sr. (his son’s wife, Elizabeth Porter Todd, was Abraham Lincoln’s sister-in-law), as the first Illinois Territory governor. The seat of government was in Kaskaskia on the Mississippi River. By 1812, all tax abiding free white males gained the right to vote. At the first general election in October, Shadrach Bond was sent to the U.S. Congress as the first territorial representative of Illinois; Pierre Menard became president of the Council of Five (one from each county) who assisted the governor; and a six-man House of Representatives was chosen (Howard, 76 and 79).

After the War of 1812, the Native American population of the Illinois Territory remained on the defensive and compelled, more and more every year, to concede white settler ownership of the land. The population centers of the territory were along the rivers with the southern part most densely populated and the northern part—even Chicago—most thinly populated. The population of Chicago—where Jean Baptist Point du Sable (of African descent) and his Potawatomi wife, Kitiwaha, operated a trading post from 1779-1800, and Fort Dearborn was built in 1804—had only a population of 100 in 1830. By late 1818, the population of the territory was estimated at 40,000, the number needed for statehood. However, Robert Howard in *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) stated that “a federal report said Illinois had 34,620 when it was admitted as a state (p. 102). [Author James Paul]



37. Continuation of article “April 1818: Potawatomi apprehensive about impending Illinois statehood”:

On November 20, 1817, Daniel Pope Cook, a lawyer who by 1818 became the clerk of the Illinois Territorial House of Representatives, editorialized for Illinois statehood in Kaskaskia’s *Intelligencer*. By the end of January 1818, the Illinois Territorial legislature and governor endorsed an Illinois statehood bill for the U.S. Congress to consider. The bill passed on April 14 and was signed by President James Monroe on April 18, 1818. The next task for the Illinois Territorial legislature was to write a constitution for the proposed state. The main issue to be addressed in the summer of 1818 would be slavery. Native Americans including the Potawatomi realized that their constitutional rights would be nonexistent. Indian removal was the sentiment of the time. Some Potawatomi had allied in 1811-12—War of 1812—with Tecumseh, his brother the Prophet, and the British when this Native American-British alliance fought against the Indiana and Illinois Territorial military (which promoted white settler advancement into Native American lands). Some Potawatomi had participated in the attack and burning of Fort Dearborn. They had gained the reputation of “known troublemakers” by the Illinois Territory governing officials (Howard, p. 89). The Illinois Territory legislature in 1814, according to Howard, “. . . obligated itself to pay fifty dollars [equivalent to \$800 today] for the death of an Indian who entered a settlement with hostile intent. Civilians who had official permission to send an expedition into Indian country could qualify for a one-hundred-dollar [equivalent of \$1600 today] reward for killing an Indian warrior” (Howard, p. 93). With this reputation and reward system, one can understand how the Potawatomi of the Kankakee would be apprehensive about impending Illinois statehood. [Author James Paul]



38. In the following recreation, a Potawatomi speaks about the year 1832:

After the Black Hawk War ended, the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe, changed our lives. The treaty was between the outsiders and the chiefs and headmen of the “Potawatomie Tribe of Indians of the Prairie and Kankakee”. The treaty gave land to those with Potawatomie blood so they could sell it. Our land is now being sold to outsiders since we must move to the sun set side of the Mississippi River. Ti-yar-ac-ke is now open for outsiders. In return for this land, we are to be given new lands, money, and supplies to help us build new homes. We worry that this money and supplies will be little, or late in arrival, and we will suffer after removal to the lands toward the setting sun. As our bands now begin to leave our homes and villages, our hearts are broken. Squaws cry. Braves and the old people shed tears as they see for the last time their Ti-yar-ac-ke, its beauty, its trees along the river, its openness full of game, fur bearing animals, deer, and its clear waters full of fish.

[James Paul—“The Story of Twin Oaks: Prequel” in *The Herald*, July 2017].





Francois Bourbonnais, Sr.  
Present-day Bourbonnais is the namesake of the French-Canadian, Francois Bourbonnais, Sr., who resided north of Bourbonnais Creek from about 1829 to 1834.



Bourbonnais made a living trading with the Potawatomi, most likely as an independent contractor, buying trade goods from Astor's American Fur Company—trading with the locals for furs, and then selling the furs back to the fur company.

Sketches by Vic Johnson

He and his wife, Catherine (Catish) Chevalier, a *metis* member of a prominent Potawatomi family, lived in a cabin a few rods north of Bourbonnais Creek (just northwest of today's Dairy Queen) with their 6 children, Francois Jr., Washington, Peter, Catherine, Mary Josette and Anthony, until 1834. They then moved to a site on the north bank of the Kankakee River, where the senior citizen's high rise in the city of Kankakee now stands. Eventually, Francois, Catish, and most of their children left the area during the removal of the Prairie Potawatomi to the Platte country of western Missouri. It is thought that Francois Bourbonnais Sr. died sometime in the late 1840s.

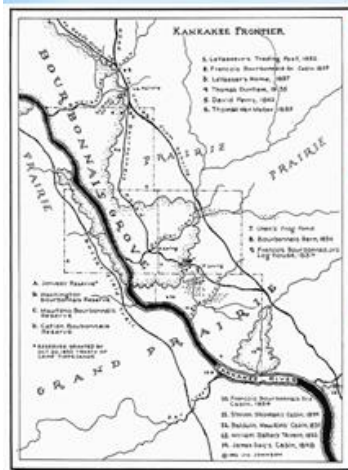
39. No additional narrative for this slide.



She-mor-gar-Soldier's Village  
Ninth and Bridge in White City  
just East of Kennedy Drive  
(near Soldier's Creek)  
He often liked to wear the  
clothing of soldiers...



40. No additional narrative for this slide.



Sketch by Vic Johnson.

\* Many of these reserves or reservations were later sold to traders (such as Gurdon Hubbard or Noel LeVasseur) or wealthy land speculators such as Dr. Hiram Todd. This was done to satisfy debts owed at local trading posts called "factories". Some Indians used the money to have cabins built for them (William Baker built a cabin for Shawanasee in 1831).

\* In the 1820s, Hubbard and LeVasseur (working for John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company) traded with Chief Tamin's band which lived down on the Iroquois River near what would later become Watseka. Their trading post was located on the river near Bunkum—which later became the town of Iroquois (Klasey, p. 20).

\* As was the custom, Hubbard took Tamin's niece as his wife for two years until he divorced her to move to his new store in Danville. Watcheke then "married" LeVasseur for about 8 years until he divorced her and escorted her to the Mississippi River where she and her children moved to a western reservation near present day Council Bluffs. LeVasseur and Watcheke had been living in Bourbonnais Grove for about 4 years. They moved up from Bunkum and became neighbors with Francois Bourbonnais Sr. and his Potawatomi wife Catish who later moved where downtown Kankakee later developed.

41. No additional narrative for this slide.



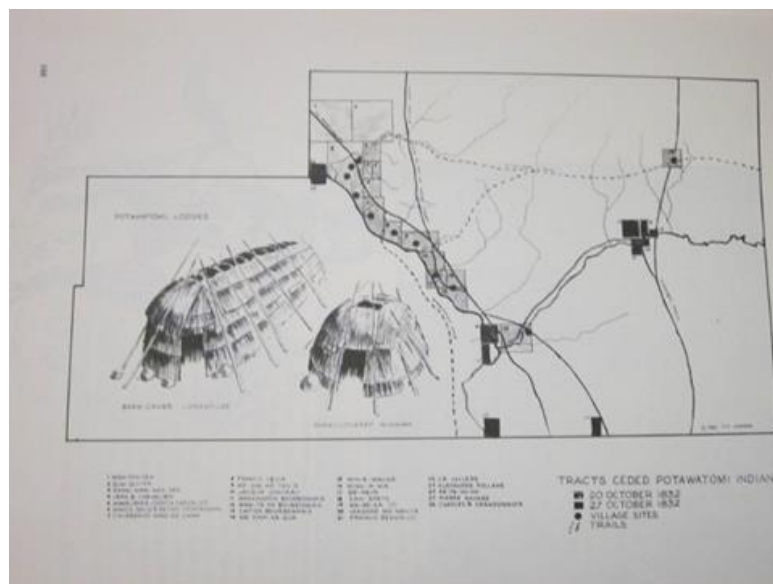
- \* Watcheke had at least 2 children by LeVasseur (Olivie and Archange). LeVasseur also apparently had children with Mesawkequa (who might have lived with him while he was moving to Bourbonnais Grove in 1832--Watcheke was in Kansas until 1834. Mesawkequa was granted 2 sections--1280 acres at Waisuskuck's Village near Aroma Park (Elk's Golf Course) in the 1832 treaty.
- \* Around 1840, Watcheke surprised LeVasseur by visiting his new wife and daughter at his big stone house in Bourbonnais. He made her promise to leave his new family in peace. He paid her off and convinced her to marry Francis Bergeron. She then went to Kansas but was back in Will Co. in 1841. By 1844, she went back to Council Bluffs and eventually had 4 children with Bergeron.
- \* Summer 1863--Watsaka made her last visit to Bourbonnais, Middleport (Watsaka), and Bunkum/Buncombe (Iroquois). She was apparently accompanied by her husband and three of her children. They stayed at the house of Mr. Sid Vail of Monmouth, IL. "During her visit the Vail's noticed that Watsaka was as comfortable in the white man's world as she was her own. In essence walking in two cultures. Additionally, she appeared intelligent, was quick witted and was an engaging conversationalist, she had good taste in clothes."
- \* She posed with Sid Vail's daughter Phoebe Vail Johnson in a lovely picture.
- \* She was the last Potawatomi to set foot in Iroquois County.
- \* She was the daughter of Shabbona. . . .

42. No additional narrative for this slide.



- \* George Godfrey--October 7, 2019
- \* Great Great Grandson of Watcheke and Francis Bergeron
- \* Watsaka Mural Dedication

43. No additional narrative for this slide.



44. No additional narrative for this slide.



In 1832, Blackhawk led 2000 Sauk and Fox back into Western Illinois and Wisconsin from Iowa. Billy Caldwell, Alexander Robinson and Shabbona seeking to protect the remaining Potawatomi, tried to calm Blackhawk and warn the white settlers in northern Illinois. Major Isiah Stillman with 300-400 militia skirmished with the Indians near Dixon and lost. The 12 scalped militia men were later commented on by a young soldier; Abraham Lincoln. Stillman's Run encouraged local Potawatomi and a few Sauk to take out their anger over a dam which blocked their fishing at the Davis Farm on Indian Creek. Fifteen settlers were killed and scalped and many of the bodies were mutilated. Sylvia and Rachel Hall were captured and later ransomed.



45. No additional narrative for this slide.

This was the beginning of the end for many of the Indians in Illinois, and forced removal was begun in earnest. (Gov. Reynolds declared the state to be “under siege by hostile Indians” and used this incident to champion the cause for removal) .

*Five Main Reasons for Removal:*

1. Game Depletion (food and furs)--last buffalo gone around 1820;
2. Indians could not become farmers (agriculture clashed with their seminomadic hunting and gathering;
3. Government annuities were insufficient to feed large numbers;
4. Indians couldn't vote; and
5. Indian lands left in their natural state were ripe for the taking according to white settlers.

Basically they were pushed west and south by settlers wanting their lands from the 17th till the 19th centuries-Pontiac 1796, Tecumseh 1811, Fort Dearborn 1812, Blackhawk 1832. Treaties were signed and the Potawatomi gave up their homelands & moved.

46. No additional narrative for this slide.

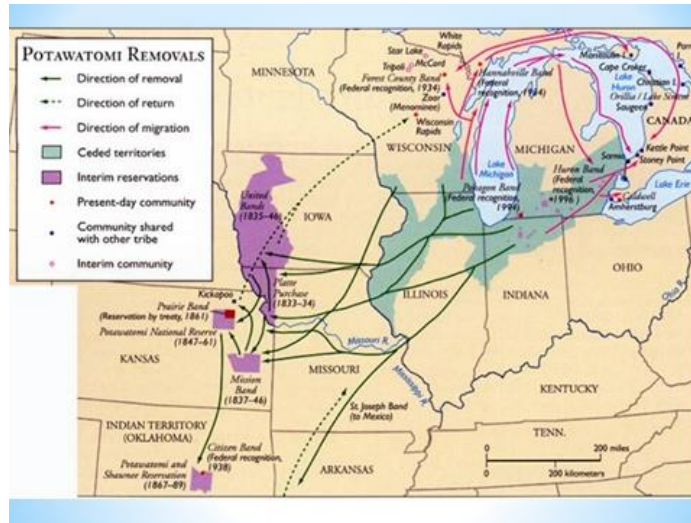


This drawing by Joseph Campbell portrays “Uncle Sid” Vail’s (of Momence) account of the Potawatomi crossing the Kankakee River (Houde and Klasey, p. 145).

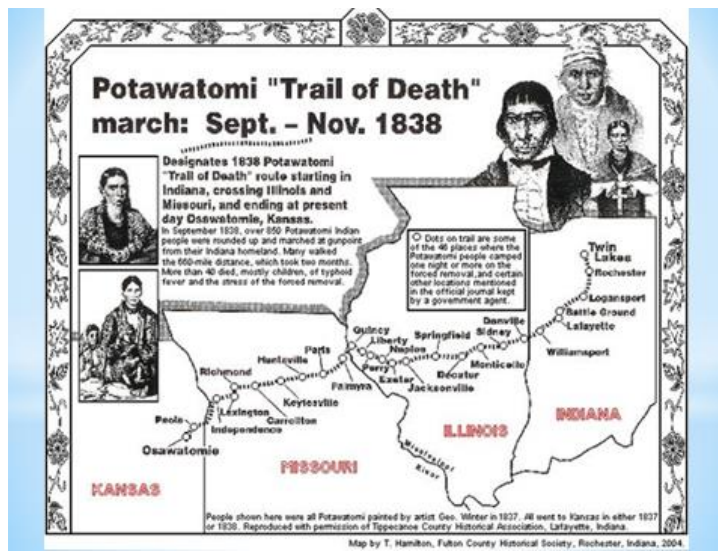
- \* Locally in the Kankakee River Valley, Francois Bourbonnais, Sr. and Catish sold some land for \$600-1833.
- \* Bourbonnais, Sr. and Mawteno sold the rest for \$1920 in 1847.
- \* Chief Yellowhead's land near Grant Park sold for \$800-1833.
- \* Dr. Hiram Todd bought 3200 acres of Shawanasee's land along Rock Creek for \$4000-1833.
- \* Chief Mesheketeno at Davis Creek sold to LeVasseur and Hubbard for \$2200 in 1834.
- \* Most of the local Indians had left for Iowa and later Kansas and Oklahoma by 1838.

47. No additional narrative for this slide.







48. No additional narrative for this slide.



49. No additional narrative for this slide.

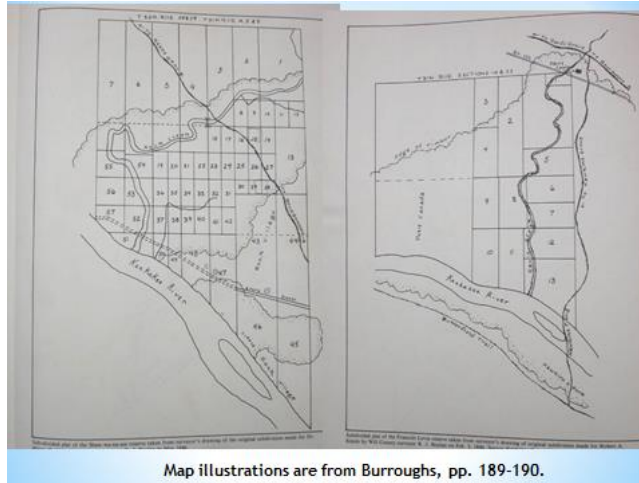
Shawanasee died in 1834 and was interred sitting up in a small log cabin structure on a bluff facing NW overlooking Rock Creek (not far from where I, John Hassett, grew up). Supposedly his rifle, tomahawk, pipes, and tobacco were taken by a voyageur squatter named Joseph Shabonier who later sold his bones to Rush Medical School in Chicago and they were destroyed in the great fire in 1781.





Mark Wakat (Altorff Native) standing behind monument—with wrong date—marking Shawanasee interment site.

50. No additional narrative for this slide.



Map illustrations are from Burroughs, pp. 189-190.

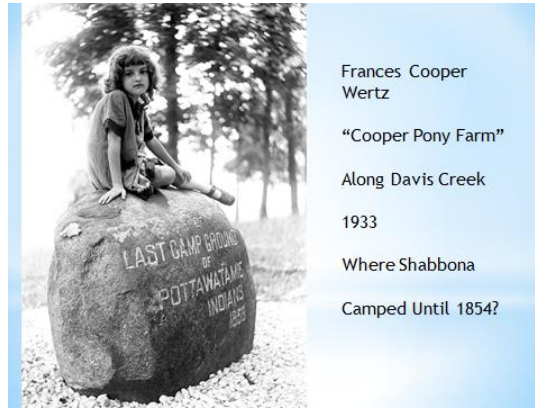
51. These maps indicate the reservations in the area of today's Kankakee River State Park.



52. No additional narrative for this slide.



53. No additional narrative for this slide.



54. No additional narrative for this slide.

**Lands of the Potawatomi, 2014**

Map showing reservation, community, or lands: Forest County Potawatomi, Match-e-be-nashishewish Band of Potawatomi, Potawatomi of the Huron, Potawatomi of the Marquette, Walpole Band, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and Prairie Band of Potawatomi.

Photograph taken at *Isle a la Cache*.

**POTAWATOMI TRIBES**

- 1 CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
POPULATION: 20,000
- 2 PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION  
NEEDSVILLE, MISSOURI  
POPULATION: 8,000
- 3 POKAGON BAND OF POTAWATOMI  
POKAGON, MICHIGAN  
POPULATION: 2,000
- 4 NARRAVILLE INDIAN COMMUNITY  
NARRAVILLE, MISSOURI  
POPULATION: 950
- 5 MICHIGAN HURON BAND OF THE POTAWATOMI  
ALLEN, MICHIGAN  
POPULATION: 800
- 6 MATCH-E-BE-NASHISHEWISH BAND OF POTAWATOMI INDIANS  
WALPOLE, MICHIGAN  
POPULATION: 600
- 7 FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI  
FOREST COUNTY, WISCONSIN  
POPULATION: 1,400
- 8 WALKOLE ISLAND FIRST NATION  
WALKOLE ISLAND, ONTARIO, CANADA  
POPULATION: 400

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Reenactment at *Isle a la Cache*.

55. No additional narrative for this slide.

As a Potawatomi, what question would you like to ask Noel LeVasseur when you meet him at his Bourbonnais Grove trading post in 1837?

What positive or negative things have you heard about this outsider, Noel LeVasseur?

A.  
B.  
C.  
D.

*A Continuing Debate*

How did Noel LeVasseur Relate to the Potawatomi:  
Was He a Friend and Protector or  
an Opportunist and Exploiter?

56. No additional narrative for this slide, but please prepare your question and answers.



Slide 57




**Noel LeVasseur sings *A la claire fontaine*—staying in rhythm with rowing his canoe.**  
 (Refrain)  
 Lui y a longtemps que je t'aime, I've loved you for so long,  
 Jamais je ne t'oublierai. I will never forget you.

*A la claire fontaine,  
 M'en allant promener.  
 J'ai trouve l'eau si belle,  
 Que je m'y suis baigne.* (Refrain) As I was walking,  
 by the clear fountain,  
 I found the water so lovely,  
 I had to bathe.

*Sous les feuilles d'un chene,  
 Je me suis fait secer,  
 Sur la plus haute branche,  
 Le rossignol chantat.* (Refrain) Under the oak's leaves,  
 I lay and died,  
 On the highest bough,  
 a nightingale sang.

*Chante, rossignol, chante,  
 Toi qui as le coeur gai,  
 Tu as le coeur a rire,  
 Moi, je l'ai a pleurer.* (Refrain) Sing, nightingale, sing,  
 you of the joyous heart,  
 Your heart is made for laughing,  
 mine can only cry.

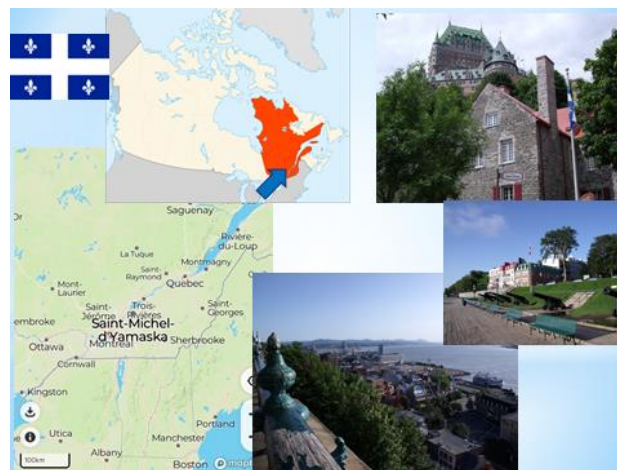
*J'ai perdu mon ami,  
 Sans l'avoir merite,  
 Pour un bouquet de roses,  
 Que je lui refusai.* (Refrain) I lost my love,  
 without deserving it,  
 Because of a bouquet of roses,  
 I kept from her.



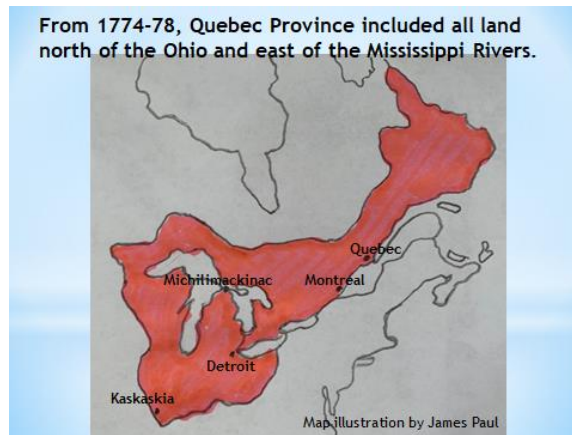
This voyageur scene is at Isle a La Cache.

58. [The following first person account by Noel LeVasseur is based on Dr. James Paul's interpretation after reviewing the historical resources.]

[Noel LeVasseur enters singing *A La Claire Fontaine*.] *Bozho, nikan ! Nee ga Nah neh gee? (Potawatomi language for "Hello, friend! How are you my friend?") Bonjour madames, mademoiselles, et monseurs, mon amis! C'est bon etre ici. Comment allez vous? Tres bien! Je m'appelle Noel LeVasseur, Francais-Canadien et Quebecois. Aussi, je suis le citizen de Bourbonnais en Illinois. Vous comprenez? Parlez-vous Francais? Oui.* (Translation from the French: Good day ladies and gentlemen, my friends. It is good to be here. How are you? Very good! My name is Noel LeVasseur, French-Canadian and of Quebec Province. Also, I am a citizen of Bourbonnais in Illinois. Do you understand? Do you speak French? Yes). Somehow you will understand me as I will speak to you in my third language, *Anglais* (English).



59. I was named Noel because I was born in on Christmas Eve 1799 in the farming village of St. Michel D'Yamask, southwest of Quebec and northeast of Montreal. My parents were Antoine (1766-1824) and Marie Angelique [Lavelle] (1771-1851) LeVasseur. I have five siblings: Antoine (1798-99), Michel (1800-86), Marie (1802- ), Amable (1804- ), and Pierre (1807-08). We were a farming family with no formal education. Here you see the Quebec flag and the panoramic views above the St. Lawrence River which I and my family enjoyed when we traveled to Quebec City.



60. As a *Quebecois*, I knew about the rich fur trade in lands to the southwest which had once been a part of Quebec Province. After Native American languages, French was the second most common language in this area.



61. In 1816 when I was seventeen, I was recruited to fur trading work for the North West Company by Pierre Rastel, sieur de Rocheblave. In that year, I was sent to establish a trading post at Mackinac Island in the interest of the North West Company. I remained there during the winter. The company comprised eleven men, and during that year we erected a fort and wintered there. I decided to leave the employ of the North West Company in 1817, and along with an Indian companion, concluded to push out into the wilderness. We equipped a small boat, a canoe made of birch bark. Do you see the rolled birch bark and the black pitch used to seal the seams? The pitch was made out of charcoal, spruce gum, and bear grease. We collected these materials all year long. When we set out, we followed the lake into Green Bay, and from there into the wilderness. Following the trail of the Indians until we struck the headwaters of the Wisconsin River, there we built a larger craft and followed the river to the Indian village at Fond du Lac. We wintered there and retraced our steps in the spring.

At the top of the map above, you can see one of my first employer's (the British North West Fur Company) trading posts located north of Grand Marais, Minnesota. The arrow to the right indicates Mackinac Island, home of my current employer which I joined in 1818: the American Fur Company.



62. By the spring of 1818, the year Illinois became a state, I entered the service of John Jacob Aster, head of the American Fur Company. In 1821, I met Gurdon Hubbard (1802-86) at the company's Bureau Creek trading post in north central Illinois, located near the Illinois River. Hubbard was in charge of the post. He became a close friend of mine the rest of my life. He and I portaged from Lake Michigan to the Deplanes River down the Kankakee River to the Iroquois River to the chief village of the Iroquois Indians. The Iroquois and Potawatomi had allied earlier against attacks by the Illiniwek. We set up a trading post on the south side of the Iroquois River called Bunkum. It was one of the first trading posts in the Northwest south of Mackinac, and we traded with all Indians who made this place their head village. In 1822, Hubbard established another trading post near Danville, Illinois. Also in that same year, Hubbard and I met a fellow French-Canadian by the name of Antione Bourbonnais at our Bureau Creek fur trading post. In 1823, our fur company assigned Antoine Bourbonnais to a post on the Kankakee River. Other fur traders are pictured above at the post known as *Isle a La Cache*.



63. If I were a bird in some modern day flying over the confluence of the Kankakee and DesPlaines Rivers with the Illinois River, it would appear as the above.



## Early Kankakee River Valley pioneers and settlers.



Above and below sketches of Bourbonnais Family by Vic Johnson.



Thomas Durham (1784-1854)—graphic art by Christina Bradley.

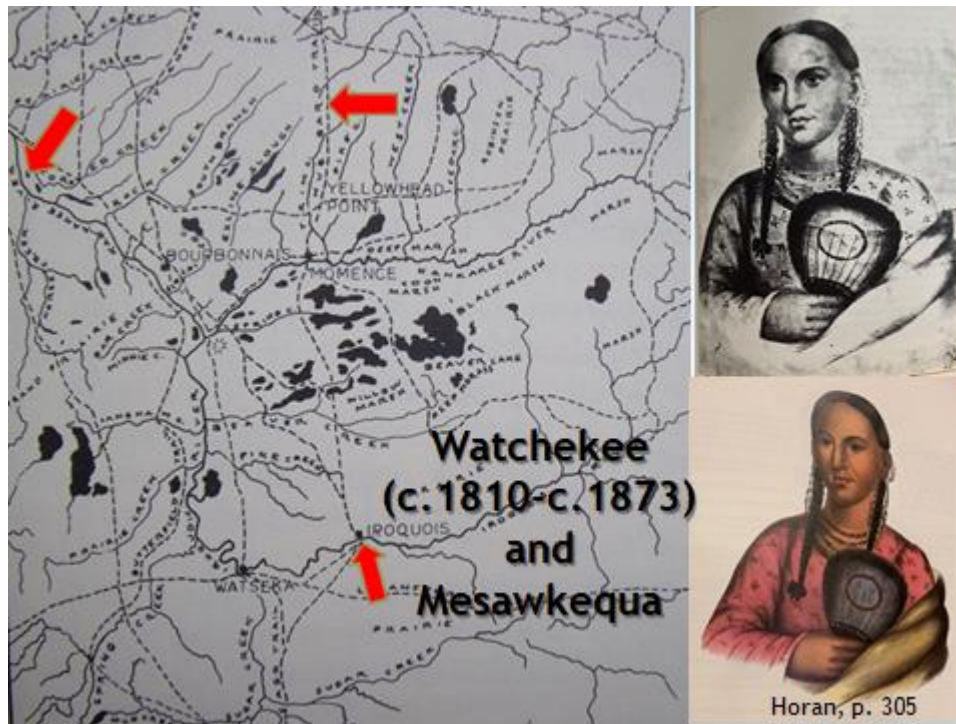


Gurdon Hubbard (1802-86)



64. On one of my journeys along the Kankakee in the mid-1820s, I finally met Antoine's brother Francois Bourbonnais, Sr., and I remarked ". . .white man though he was, after many years of residence and association with the Pottawatomi, living on terms of equality and after the manner of the Indian, [he] had completely lost his identity and distinguishing characteristics as a white man" (Burroughs, *Kankakee's Earliest Pioneer Settlers*, p. 116 as quoting l'Abbe Fanning) . By the time I and my associates established a Bourbonnais Grove trading house in 1834, Francois Bourbonnais, Sr. had already been living here with the natives for several years.

Here you can see the Bourbonnais family. From left to right above: Antoine, his brother Francois Sr., Francois's son's Francois Jr. and Washington. From left to right below: Francois Bourbonnais Sr.'s children Peter, Mary Josette, Anthony, Catherine, and his Potawatomi wife Catish. In addition to myself and Gurdon Hubbard, you also see my neighbor in Bourbonnais Grove Thomas Durham.

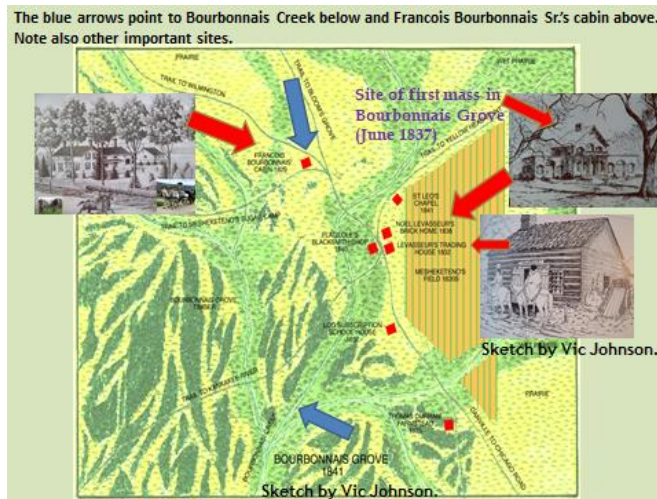


65. A “custom of the country” was that fur traders and Potawatomi could marry for mutual benefit. With few non-native women in the fur trading areas, some men married native women. Opportunities for advancement would open for both parties in the relationship. The wife would have access to some privileges not available to other native women. Likewise, the husband would secure more trading access to the local tribes and thereby advance economically. Their children, *metis*, would also gain advancement opportunities. The portraits seen here are close likenesses of the two Potawatomi that I married (Horan, p. 305). [The portraits are of Rantchewaime, or Flying Pigeon, in James D. Moran’s *The Mckenney-Hall Portrait Gallery of American Indians*].

From 1829 to 1835, I was married to Mesawkequa, a Potawatomi princess who was the daughter of Chief Shabonee and his wife Monoska, and niece of Chief Tamin of the local Potawatomi tribe. She and I had two children: Marianne (1830-50) and George William. Mesawkequa. Our lives separated when she left with a large number of Potawatomi during the removal of 1835. By then I was married to Mesawkequa’s sister Watchekee (Godfrey, p. *Grass Widow*, p. 5).

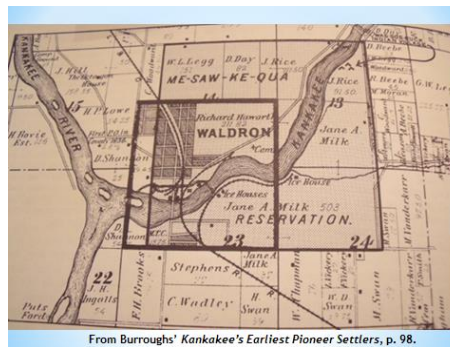
Watchekee had earlier been married to Gurdon Hubbard from 1824-27, and they had two children who died in infancy. Watchekee’s name means Overseer. She was named after a heroine of Potawatomi legend. In the harsh and deep snow winter of 1830-31, Watchekee came to the aid of white settlers along the Iroquois River. She went briefly to Kansas with the Kickapoo in 1832 and returned in 1833.

The map above denotes with red arrows Bourbonnais Grove where Watchekee and I established our new trading post, the Hubbard Trail which Gurdon Hubbard used to travel to Chicago, and the site of our trading post at Bunkum.



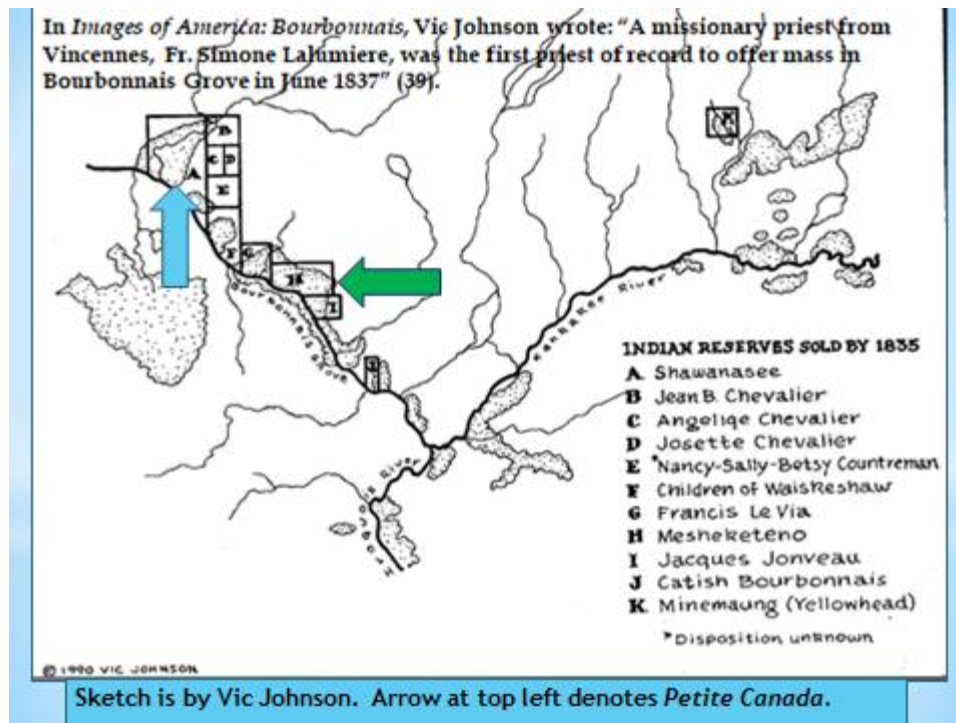
66. As Gurdon Hubbard developed the Danville trading post and began traveling to Chicago, I continued service with John Jacob Aster and the American Fur Company, who furnished me with a stock of goods valued at \$6,008 [\$96,128 today] at Bunkum. I traded with the Indians but the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in October 1832 compelled them to move west of the Mississippi River. In 1828 Hubbard left the Bunkum trading post and began trading with the Indians at Chicago Creek. The year before, 1827, the American Fur Company disbanded and Hubbard acquired all the company's Illinois assets. In 1832, he gave me complete control of the post at Bunkum.

Change was in the air that year of 1832. I realized that my life would change from fur trader to something else as the Potawatomi were compelled to move west of the Mississippi by the terms of the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe. On one of our trading expeditions to the Village of Chief Shaw-waw-nas-see in 1832, our party was compelled to make camp seven miles south of Rock Creek in an area along the Chicago to Danville Road where the trees along the river to the west formed a point "La Pointe". I exclaimed "What a beautiful country is this in which we live!" Two years later in 1834, with the help of my new wife, Watcheke, I purchased that site from the Potawatomi chief Mesheketeno. While I continued to work at the trading post on the Iroquois River, I instructed my associates, Henry Boucher and Dominick Bray, to build the Bourbonnais Grove trading house in 1834.



67. Here you can see the reservation that Mesawkequa was given in 1832 Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe. The absence of Wat-che-kee from Illinois in 1832 at the time of the signing of the treaty may explain why she did not receive a reservation like the one awarded to Mesawkequa. By the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe, over 800,000 acres were transferred from Potawatomi to U.S. ownership. The treaties granted individual Potawatomi and children of Potawatomi and French-Canadian marriages choice land reservations of 320-3200 acres.





68. Chief Mesheketeno's reservation is denoted by the turquoise arrow above. After I came to know Chief Mesheketeno whose village sprawled around Bourbonnais Grove, he told me one day that he had a dream the previous night. In that dream, I gave him my black horse as a sign of friendship—which I reluctantly did since I had no choice but to honor the wishes of the Great Spirit who caused the dream. I thought over the situation, and a few days later, I told Chief Mesheketeno that I had a dream, and in the dream in order to insure our friendship, he gave me 300 acres of sugar maples. The chief gave me the land and asked that neither one of us dream anymore. In 1834, I purchased 640 acres from Chief Mesheketeno's reservation for \$1000 [\$16,000 today]. I soon began to purchase more land in Bourbonnais Grove and northwest of Bourbonnais Grove.

In 1837, I traveled back to the village of my birth, St. Michel D'Yamask. I was not recognized at first because I had been gone for twenty years, even by my mother—until I showed her my hand with a missing part of my finger which I lost during a childhood accident. I told the villagers of the endless opportunity of rich farming land in Bourbonnais Grove. As a result of this recruitment, many French-Canadian families migrated to Bourbonnais Grove. They settled in *Petite Canada* noted by the gold arrow above. The first Roman Catholic mass to be celebrated was in June 1837 in my new home.

My home was built by Thomas Durham in 1837.



69. Watcheke and I had three children: Elihu, Olivie (b. 1835), and Archange (b. 1837). Watcheke and I remained at the Buncomb trading post until 1834. In 1837, Watcheke and I separated and she left for Council Bluffs, Iowa where her tribe had been assigned. She and the children were part of the Potawatomi Removal in 1837 led by Lewis H. Sands. I “shadowed” the removal to make sure Watcheke and the children were not mistreated.

In 1837, I asked my friend and neighbor, Thomas Durham who was also a brick mason, to build an Early Classical Style house just northeast of the trading house. This was the first brick house in the area. Durham’s farmstead was located just to the south on the Chicago-Danville Road. When our house was completed, I invited Father Simone Lalumiere, from Vincennes, to say the first mass in my home in June 1837. What a proper beginning for our new home!

What was your answer to this question at the beginning: How would you react to the Indian Removal Acts (1830s)?

1. Move west of the Mississippi River onto land set aside beyond the current reach of white settlers.
2. Move west, but periodically travel many miles back to family homeland hunting and fishing areas in Illinois.
3. Resist and fight the outsiders initially, but if necessary, move west and periodically return to Illinois with limited or no rights, property, and prospects.
4. Assimilate with the white settlers through intermarrying and learning their culture.
5. Resist and possibly die in violent clashes with white settlers.

70. No additional narrative for this slide, but please answer the question.

**Postscript—the fate of the Native American person who traveled with you on this journey:**

1. Shabonee/Shabbona supported Tecumseh in the Battle of Tippecanoe and the Battle of the Thames during the War of 1812. He returned to Illinois in defeat. He tried to calm Chief Black Hawk in 1832 in order to protect the remaining Potawatomi, and he warned white settlers against impending attack. He lived in Potawatomi lands across the Mississippi, but returned to Illinois and lived many summers near Davis creek from 1849 till 1854. He died near Morris in 1859 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.
2. Watchekee assimilated with white culture by marrying Gurdon Hubbard, myself, and Francis Bergeron. She traveled four times back and forth from across the Mississippi River to Illinois. She visited me twice in 1840 and 1863. I provided education and other needs for my three *metis* children. Watchekee died about 1873 in Oklahoma.
3. Main Poc (Main Pouche—Crippled Hand) was born in 1765 and led war parties in the late 1700s which killed settlers and their livestock. He went on the warpath against the Osage in 1805 and 1810, and white settlers south of Peoria in 1811. He recruited Sacs, Kickapoo, Ottawa, and Chippewa to support the British in the War of 1812. He moved to a new village along the Yellow River in northwest Indiana, and led raids against Fort Harrison [Terre Haute]. Main Poc refused to attend all peace councils. He died in 1816.
4. Mesawkequa assimilated with the white culture by becoming my first wife. As a daughter of Shabonee/Shabbona, she was given a reservation [in what became the city of Kankakee] by the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in 1832. Her marriage to me ended in 1835 when she left with a large number of Potawatomi who were removed to northwestern Missouri. She then moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1837, and then to back to Missouri. Mesawkequa resided there when August Wiley visited her and paid her \$1600 for two sections of her reservation so that he could lay out plans to build the Village of Aroma Park (Johnson, *Sesquicentennial Reader*, p. 20).
5. Billy Caldwell/Sauganash was born in 1780 to a Mohawk mother and Irish father. He fought with Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames and returned to Illinois in defeat. He became a trader and negotiator of treaties in Chicago and Peoria as a Potawatomi chief. He led the Potawatomi to Council Bluffs, Iowa. He became a Justice of the Peace and later a Judge in Peoria. He died of cholera in 1841 in Iowa.

**71. Postscript—the Fate of the Potawatomi who traveled with you on this journey. No additional narrative for this slide.**

6. Alexander Robison/Chechepinquay rose to prominence as chief of the Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa during the removal period. During the War of 1812, he fought for Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames, and returned to Illinois in defeat. During the Fort Dearborn Massacre in 1812 he came to the aid of John Kinzie and Captain and Mrs. Heald. He was a staunch supporter of both the Potawatomi and the white traders and settlers. He befriended white settlers and died in Chicago in 1872.
7. Catish assimilated with white culture by marrying Francois Bourbonnais, Sr. After the Black Hawk War of 1832, the Bourbonnais family moved into a log cabin of a settlement that would soon become named after Francois and his brother Antoine Bourbonnais. As a result of the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in 1832, Catish received a 640 acre reservation that later became the downtown Kankakee. The Francois Bourbonnais, Sr. family then moved to the north bank of the Kankakee River inside this reservation. During the summer of 1836, the Bourbonnais family moved to western Missouri during the Potawatomi removal (Johnson, *Sesquicentennial Reader*, pp. 18-19).
8. Mesheketeno rose to prominence as chief of the Potawatomi during the removal period. His village and fields encompassed much of present day central and northwestern part of Bourbonnais, Illinois. The village stretched east to west from the corn fields to the sugar trees along the bank of the Kankakee River. He was one of the signers of the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe (Mahoney, p. 48). He may have then led his villagers to Council Bluffs, Iowa during the Potawatomi removals of the 1830s.
9. Tamin was a Potawatomi chief of the village near Hubbard and my trading post at Bunkum along the Iroquois River and near the Kankakee Marsh with its fertile hunting and fishing area. He worked cooperatively with Gurdon Hubbard and gave him the nickname "Swiftwalker". Chief Tamin offered Hubbard his oldest daughter as a wife. Hubbard declined but later married Tamin's niece Watchekee. Chief Tamin led his Potawatomi villagers to Iowa on the removal of 1834.
10. Shawanasse was chief of one of the largest Potawatomi villages of Rock Creek and Little Rock Creek near or in what is today the Kankakee River State Park. His village was the site of the Great Council of Potawatomi in 1830. Shawanasse advised his people to make treaties with the white settlers in order to maintain their friendship. He was granted this land as a reservation by the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in 1832. Even though his people were supposed to remove west of the Mississippi, Shawanasse did not leave. He was old and in poor health. When he died in 1834, he was placed in a seated position above ground near Rock Creek. His pipe, tobacco, knife, rifle, tomahawk, and other artifacts were entombed with him.

**72. Postscript—the Fate of the Potawatomi who traveled with you on this journey. No additional narrative for this slide.**



The person who accompanied you on this journey actually answered the life-changing question that you answered at the beginning: *How would you react to the Indian Removal Acts (1830s)?*

How did her/his answer compare or contrast with your answer?

1. Shabbona
2. Watchekee
3. Main Poc/Main Pouche
4. Mesawkequa
5. Billy Caldwell/Sauganash
6. Alexander Robinson/Chechepinquay
7. Catish
8. Mesheketeno
9. Tamin
10. Shawanasee

73. No additional narrative for this slide, but please answer the question.

**Authors of Local History about the Potawatomi, French Colonial, and French-Canadian History.**



George Letourneau  
1831-1906

Dr. Charles Balesi

Burt Burroughs  
1862-1934

Vic Johnson

74. No additional narrative for this slide.

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75. No additional narrative for this slide.

What were the going rates for goods?

With 1 pelt to trade, choose from:

10 earrings	30 musket balls
25 needles	1 silver cross

With 2 pelts to trade, choose from:

1 cotton shirt	
1 axe	
2 yards of cloth	

With 3 pelts to trade, choose from:

1 small blanket	1 silver armband
1 tin kettle	10 strands of glass beads
3 gallons of rum	

Other types of fur had value too.

1 beaver pelt = 10 muskrat pelts or 2 deer pelts or 2 skunk pelts
2 beaver pelts = 1 otter pelt or 1 bear pelt

Sketch by Vic Johnson ©1992.

Potawatomi ask Noel LeVasseur questions at his trading post in 1837.

76. No additional narrative for this slide. See webinar for this interactive exchange between Potawatomi and Noel LeVasseur.

What pelt did you bring to trade? Due to storage issues, I can only accept one pelt from each of you today. Please pick a number from one to thirteen. That number will identify the pelt you brought with you today. I will visit with each of you after asking about this certain pelt.

1. beaver
2. muskrat
3. raccoon
4. possum
5. deer
6. bison
7. bear
8. skunk
9. fox
10. wolf
11. coyote
12. bobcat
13. otter



77. No additional narrative for this slide. See webinar for this interactive exchange between Potawatomi and Noel LeVasseur.