



Mo-ah-weh
Andrew Rapp

Nuh-toh-dee
Frank Hamilton

Beesh-eh-mooset
Paul Hamilton

Nuh-toh-dee – good player (Netadi – one who likes to play / gamble) was the Indian name of Frank J. Hamilton father of Paul J. Hamilton (Beesch eh mooset – running water). Frank at the turn of the century (early 1900s) was the interpreter for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi of Niles MI. Franks brother in law Andrew Rapp (Mo’ewe – roamer or wolf) was chief of the Niles Pokagon Band. Frank, Andrew & Paul (age 10 in 1912) crossed the Broadway Bridge & walked to the end of Lincoln Ave. Chief Rapp said

“chee-mook-key-mon wanamoo tchuta sebin kago. Tchuta, hoi! Tchuta hoi!”

“ktthemokman giwénmo shoté zibik gégo, shoté, shoté”

The white man is crazy. There was something here by the river. Near here! Near here!

He was angry because a big rock for the location of Fort St. Joseph had been misplaced to the East side of the river in 1912, they were at S. Lincoln Ave & laurel Dr. in Niles, MI where the 3 were standing in 1912 where Rapp said the fort actually was.

Fr. Charlwoix was visiting a priest friend of his at the 2nd St. Joseph mission within the fort which had been built on the West side of the St. Joe River in 1691 commissioned by Frontonac who furnished the cannon & a garrison of 12-14 French soldiers to operate the cannon which pointed away from the river towards the West. (Cahlwoix’s papers were published in France 1744)

It is also noted that Fort St. Joseph (wakigen or fort) was at the bottom of a hill, & that is why it was so easy to overtake. On the East side of the river where the archeology dig is being done, there is no hill in sight. If you travel to the West side of the river where the French Paper Mill stands you will notice that it is flat ground at the bottom of a big steep hill, this is the location of where the old Indians said the Fort actually was at.

Frontonac French governor of New France built the fort with the help of the Potawatomi (friends of the French) to help them retain their fishing & farming lands in Niles, should the Iroquois (enemies of the French) return to drive the Potawatomi off their hunting, farming, & fishing grounds as they had in the early 1600s.

Fort St. Joseph was built in 1691, it controlled Southern Michigan's principal Indian trade routes. The British took over the fort in 1761. In 1763 the Potawatomi Indians took over the fort during Pontiacs Rebellion. In 1781 Spanish raiders took over the flag for a few hours. Therefore, Niles is called the City of Four Flags, because of the fort being taken over by 4 different entities.

It is to be noted that in what is now Niles, MI existed a "Garden of Eden" of fish, where travelers from New Orleans, Montreal, Florida, & elsewhere paused at "Pawating" (place of the rapids) in their travels to Copper Harbor – the only place in the world where copper is found in its native state. The ancient Indians knew how to temper copper.

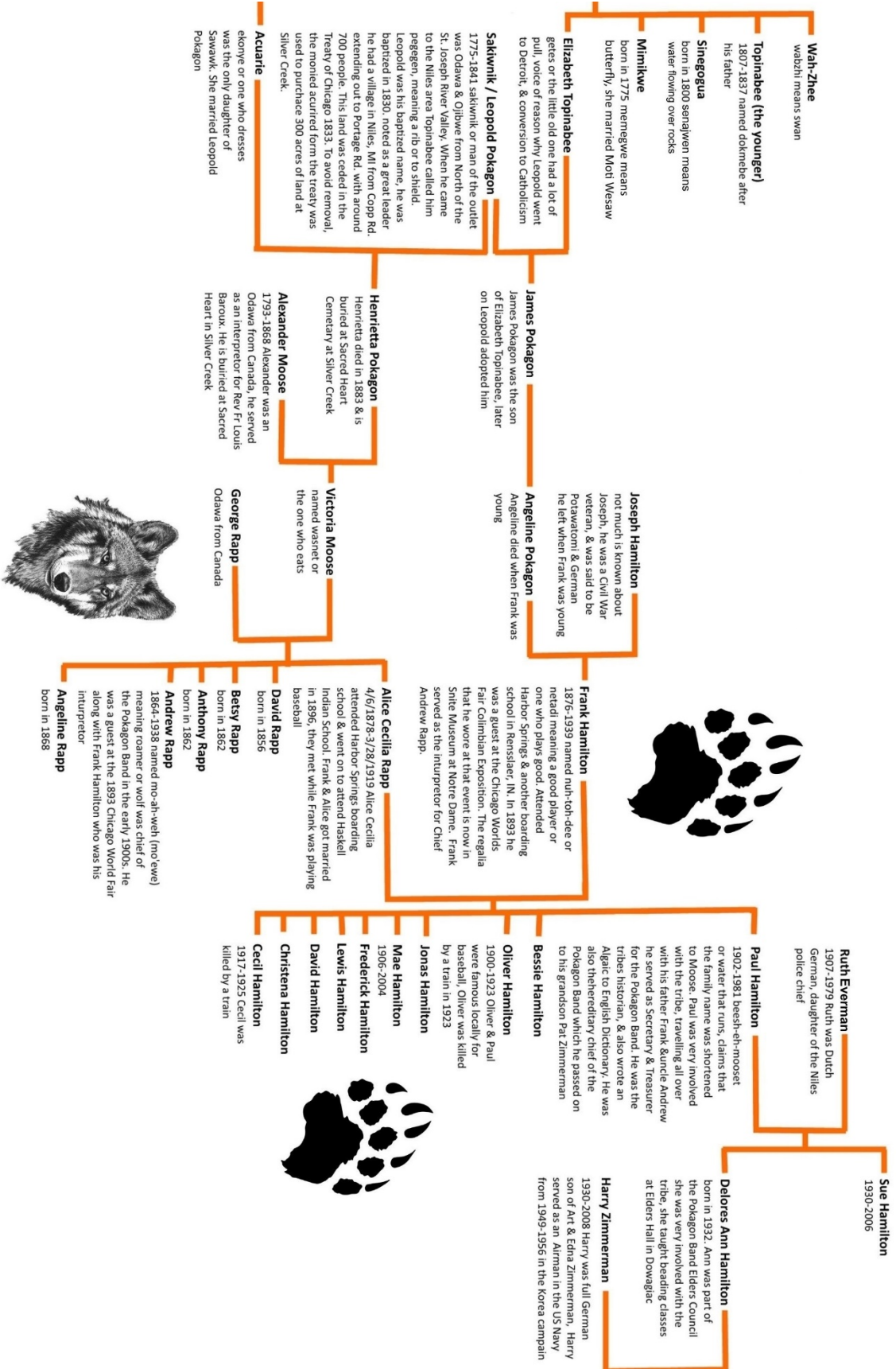
In 1977 Niles honored Nuh-toh-dee by displaying his deerskin regalia, headdress & other items he wore & used in Chicago at the Columbia Exposition in 1893 where he was the interpreter for his relative Chief Andrew Rapp, & other Potawatomi. This suit among other artifacts were donated to the City of Niles By Paul Hamilton.

Pictured to the right: Frank Hamilton & Alice Cecilia Rapp wedding photo 1896.

Alice passed away in 1919 from the Spanish flu epidemic. Together they had 10 children & she was pregnant with the 11th.

Pictured below is Frank & his 2nd wife Lottie







Bessie Hamilton



Oliver Hamilton



Paul Hamilton



Mae Hamilton



1912 The Hamilton family lived in a small cabin near Dewey Lake in Dowagiac, pictured are Oliver Hamilton age 11, Jimmie / Jonas Hamilton age 7 & Paul Hamilton age 9



Oliver Hamilton

Paul Hamilton



Pictured to the left: Paul Hamilton holds the beaded buckskin jacket that Frank Hamilton wore at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893

Pictured below: Frank Hamilton's beaded buckskin belt worn at the Columbia Exposition in 1893. This belt now resides in the Snite Museum at the University Notre Dame



Frank J. Hamilton
 Pokagon Band, Potawatomi Culture
 Man's Belt
 Southwest Michigan, U.S.A.
 1893
 leather, glass beads, cotton cloth, cotton thread,
 metal buckle and rivets
 Gift of Dolores A. Zimmerman
 98.67.003

The belt is one piece of a three piece suit made by Frank J. Hamilton. He originally made the suit to wear at the Chicago 1893 World Columbian Exhibition, where he represented the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. The floral design was a common motif used by various Algonkian bead workers in the late 19th

Pomo
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Pomo
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Pictured to the left: Beaded buckskin jacket that Frank Hamilton wore at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This jacket now resides in the Snite Museum at the University Notre Dame.

Pictured to the right: Beaded buckskin pants that Frank Hamilton wore at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This item now resides in the Snite Museum at the University Notre Dame.



Paul Hamilton married Ruth Everman who was Dutch & German, the daughter of a Niles Police Chief.

Together Paul & Ruth had 2 daughters Sue Hamilton born in 1930, & Dolores Ann Hamilton born in 1932. Dolores went on to marry Harry Zimmerman of Niles who was German who served as an Airman in the US Navy. Together Harry & Ann have 8 children



Pictured to the left: Harry Zimmerman, Dolores Ann Hamilton, & Paul Hamilton

Pictured below back row l to r: Patrick Zimmerman, Michael Zimmerman, Scott Zimmerman, Jeff Zimmerman

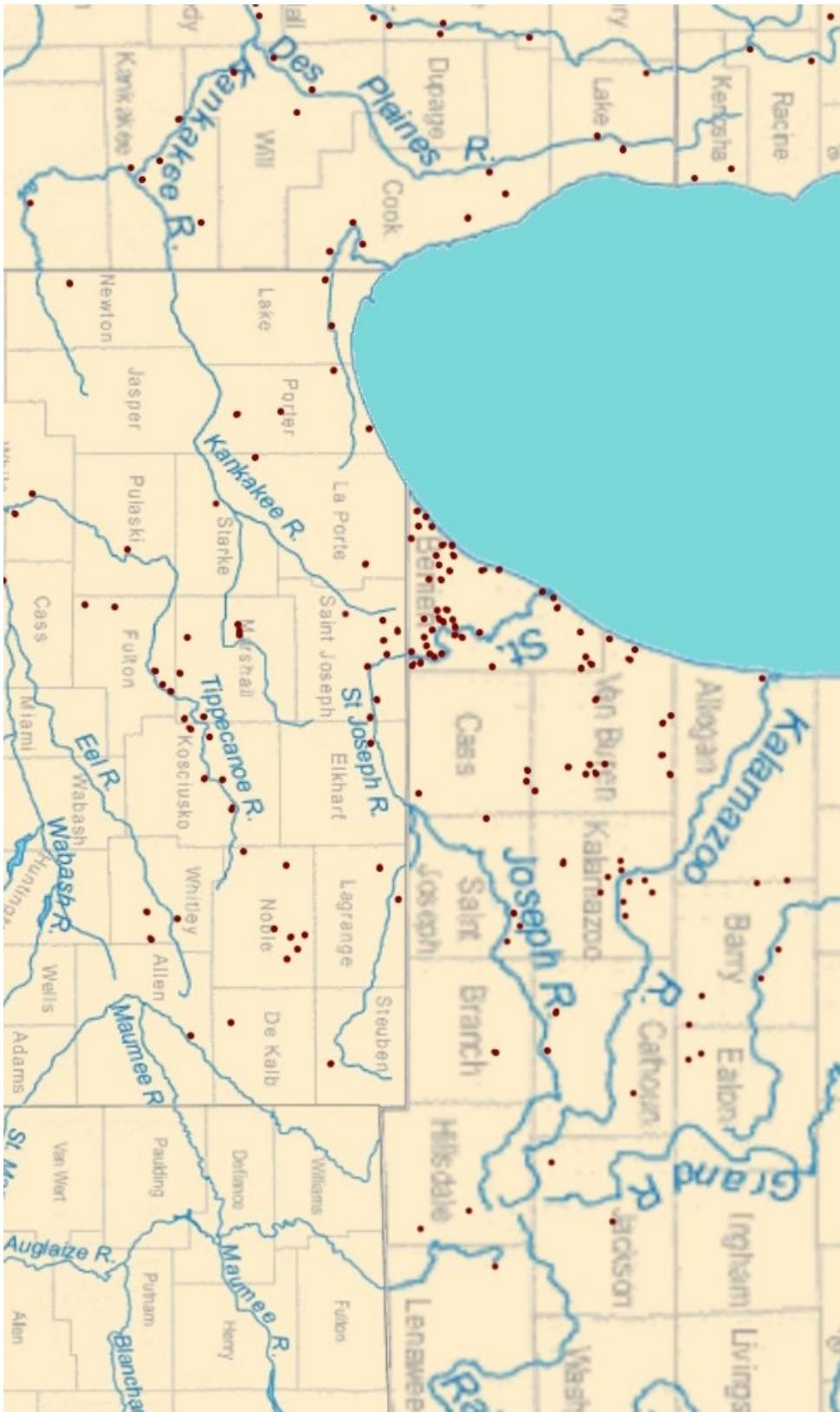
Middle row: Barbara Zimmerman, Janet Zimmerman, Becky Zimmerman, Kelly Zimmerman

Front row: Harry Zimmerman, Dolores Ann Zimmerman





Dolores 'Ann' Hamilton, & Sue Hamilton



Map by Bneiwen Kyle Malott, of local Potawatomi villages 1700-1841



Pawating / Niles, MI

Present day Niles also has a rich history with the St. Joseph River Band of Potawatomi, today known as the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians presently located in Dowagiac, MI. Historically the Pokagon Band had most presence in Niles along the St. Joseph River.

Niles, to the Potawatomi is known as "Pawating" meaning place of the rapids

The St. Joseph River, to the Potawatomi is known as "Senajwen zibé" or a river with a rocky flow, it is also known as "Znajwen zibé" or a river with a difficult flow (referring to it being rocky)

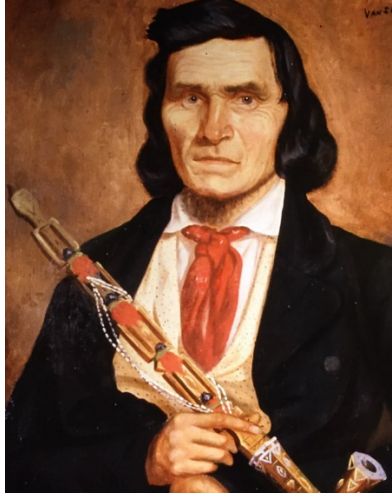


Nanaquiba

Many village sites were located along Senajwen zibé. Nanaquiba also known as Anaquiba was the hereditary chief of the Potawatomi, he is also noted as the greatest chief the Potawatomi ever had. Nanaquiba whos name was “Nenikbozo” quivering tail was born in 1720 & passed on in 1790. He led a village which was located in Pawating where the Dowagiac Creek meets Senajwen zibé. Nanaquiba & his wife Katabwé (on top of the water) had 5 sons & 1 daughter, his sons were named Topinabee (Dokemebé or he who sits quietly), Soowanernuk (Zawanëmnëk or where the yellow ochre is), Sawawk (Sawé or yellow perch), Shissahecon (Chizagen means big lake), & Chebass (Shibés or little duck). Nanaquiba & Katabwé’s daughter was named Kakema (Gagégmé or forever lake).

In 1757, 88 Potawatomi headed East to help the French battle the British at Fort William Henry in New York. Nanaquiba was one of the leaders from the St. Joseph River area. During the 7 day siege, British General Edward Braddock was killed. Nanaquiba & his warriors took 200 horses from the British. The General under Braddock happened to be George Washington. In 1758 the Potawatomi returned back to Michigan, but in their battles they encountered smallpox & brought it back with them. The smallpox epidemic killed many people, but Nanaquiba survived.

In 1778 Nanaquiba & others were out hunting when they came across some British officers. They communicated back & forth in the best way they could. The officer noticed that Nanaquiba was wearing a French Medallion, & asked why, Nanaquiba communicated that he had earned it from his efforts in helping the French. The British officer grabbed the medallion from Nanaquibas neck & gave him a British medallion. Nanaquiba had a lot of pull & because of that, the British never advanced any further in the St. Joseph region.



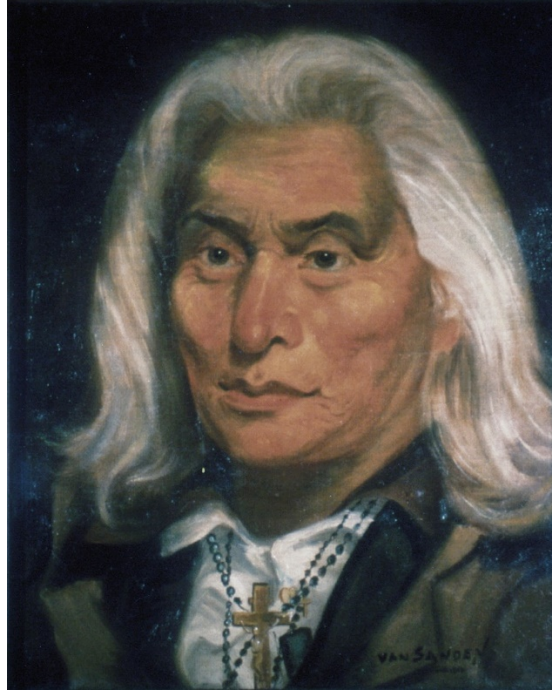
Topinabee

Topinabee whose actual name was “Dokemebé” or he who sits quietly, was born in 1758 in Pawating at his father Nanaquiba’s village site where the Dowagiac Creek runs into the St. Joseph River. Topinabee was the chief of the Potawatomi after his father. He was a main signer of every Potawatomi treaty. His name is listed 1st on each & every treaty that he was involved with. Noted as one of the greatest chiefs of the Potawatomi.

Whereas the Shawnee under Tecumseh along with other villages in the area fought against the American expansion in the War of 1812, Topinabee decided the route of peace in upholding the agreement made at the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. This created tensions between Topinabee & Tecumseh.

Topinabee had a Fall-Winter village in Niles where present day US 31 bypass meets US 12 (Old Sauk Trail). This village was called “Nswabdék” or 30 describing 30 miles to New Buffalo where he had a Spring-Summer village right on Kche gmik (Lake Michigan). Later on Topinabee had a village near the present day Lakeland Hospital in Niles, MI. Issac McCoy started Carey Mission near this village that Topinabee had named “N’do waw goy uk” meaning place of gathering or foraging (also where the City of Dowagiac’s name comes from).

An advocate against alcohol his entire life, Topinabee started to fall into a depression because of what was happening to his people. Topinabee became drunk & fell from his horse, he died 2 days later on July 27, 1826. He was buried at present day Copp Rd. at Leopold Pokagons village.



Pokagon

Leopold Pokagon who's actual name was "Sakiwnik" or man of the outlet of the river was born in 1775 in Michigan. He was not Potawatomi at all.... He was Odawa & Ojibwe, there are different stories of how he ended up in Southwest Michigan, but the one that makes the most sense is.... The Odawas used to winter in the St. Joseph River Valley area & it makes most sense that he came from the area of the mouth of the Kalamazoo River.

When Topinabee first came across him, Sakiwnik was wearing a rib in his hair roach so Topinabee called him "Pegegen" (Pokagon or rib). Pokagon married Sawawks daughter Acurie (ékonyé or she who dresses). One of their daughters was named Chingwakok (Zhegwakok or in the pines) Henrietta Pokagon who went on to marry Alexander Moose who was Odawa & French who had come from Canada. Moose lived from 1793-1868 he was an interpreter for Rev. Fr. Louis Baroux, & is now buried at Sacred Heart in Silver Creek. After the death of Acurie, Pokagon married Topinabees daughter Ketesse (Gétés or the little old one). Ketesse had a son named James Topinabee who Pokagon adopted & became James Pokagon.



Alexander Moose

Isaac McCoy

Gabriel Richard

Stephen Badin

In 1830 tensions were high with the Baptist mission led by Isaac McCoy near Topinabees village. Pokagon sought a change. He travelled to Detroit to meet with Fr. Gabriel Richard to discuss bringing back Catholic Méktéwkwenyét (black robe) presence to the area which was previously held at Fort St. Joseph. Fr. Richard initially denied this request stating that they already had a mission with McCoy. At this moment Pokagon dropped to his knees & started reciting old Catholic prayers in his language. As the interpreter started to decipher the words to Richard, he realized what he was saying. These were old prayers that had been passed down for over 100 years. Fr. Richard granted a priest in the name of Stephen Badin to return to the St Joseph River Valley to hold a Potawatomi mission. Pokagon & his family along with a number of Potawatomi in his village were baptized in 1830. Pokagon was baptized as Leopold Pokagon, & his wife Kettesse (Gétés or the old one) was baptized as Elizabeth Topinabee taking her fathers name.

Pokagon became a very influential leader of the St Joseph Potawatomi. He led a very large village near the Michigan Indiana border on the West side of the St Joseph River that was known as “Skëbgeshketokiwêk” (they grow green leaves). This village was ceded at the 1833 Treaty of Chicago.

At the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, one of the tactics carried out by the US Government was to get the leaders drunk so that they would sign away land without negotiating. Pokagon saw thru this & did not partake, on the 2nd day of negotiations because of the established relationship with the Catholic church, along with adopted ways of agriculture & local relationships, Pokagons Band was granted to stay in the Territory of Michigan, under the agreement that they would be removed to La’Abre Croche (present day Harbor Springs, MI) in 1838. When 1838 came, the area was already occupied by the Odawa due to an unrelated treaty, so monies were pooled together & Pokagon purchased land north of Dowagiac, MI in Silver Creek

Twp. Being a land owner, his people could no longer be threatened with removal. Pokagon continued the relationship with the Catholic church, deeding 40 acres of said new property to the church.

Pokagon died in 1841 in the midst of dividing the land into parcels for each family. The church was rebuilt & Leopold along with wife Elizabeth are now buried under the Southwest corner of the church.

