Early Trails & Water Routes

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Red Cliff Tribal Historic Preservation Office
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DESTINY
Glaciers, Wooly Mammoth, & Sturgeon
Map of Anishinaabe eastern migration prophecies

1.) Mooniyang (Montreal)
2.) Gichi-gakaabikaang (Niagara Falls)
3.) Wawiianhatanong (Detroit)
4.) Manitoulin Island
5.) Baawitigong (Sault Sainte Marie)
6.) Wiikwedong (Fond du Lac)
7.) Zhaagawaamikong (Chequamegon Bay)
Chequamegon Bay trail networks circa 1842 Treaty

Trygg Land Office
Map Sheet #15
Copper trade routes

"Penokee Gap, 1000 feet above Lake Superior, is a break in the rough country, a regular gap where the Bad River breaks through the Iron Range Hills on its way to Lake Superior. The Gap is an historic pathway through which the copper workers from Mexico and South America came to Lake Superior centuries ago enroute to the copper deposits on Isle Royal in Lake Superior."

Fur trade routes

Figure 1. Beaver Money used at La Pointe, Madeline Island.
Traditional Fire used in Sap Collection for Pine Pitch on Anishinaabeg Canoes

Ryan J. Howell, Senior Archaeologist at Cardno in Australia:

“We have a UW-Platteville scientist studying climate change and forest fires in the Boundary Waters and he found some surprising results. Whole islands where the Ojibwe people had been collecting pine pitch near major Fur Trade canoe routes. Using tree rings dating he has found a major sample of 20-30 locations where the Ojibwe had been doing it since the late 1600's through about 1850 or so. Some of these are like sugar bushes, and have 70-100 tapped trees, each showing layer upon layer of dozens of hundreds year old cuts.” ...
Anishinaabeg Sap Collecting Marks & Burns
... 1790, 1802, 1807, 1812, ...
Traditional Fire used in Sap Collection for Pine Pitch on Anishinaabeg Canoes

… “Our question is, it seems that the sap islands, and generally only the sap islands, caught fire on a regular basis every 5-15 years for nearly 300 years. The Ojibwe are obviously doing it on purpose or they are using a lot of fires there, the question is why? Is it to rejuvenate the pine groves, to enhance sap production, or as natural fire breaks?”
Answer: Blueberries!

2017 Anishinaabe burn with National Park Service for blueberry management on Stockton Island, Lake Superior.
Northwest Ordinance of 1787

Article IV:

[...] “The navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways and forever free, as well to the inhabitants of the said territory as to the citizens of the United States, and those of any other States that may be admitted into the confederacy, without any tax, impost, or duty therefor.”
Wisconsin Constitution of 1848

Article IX, Section 1:

“The state shall have concurrent jurisdiction on all rivers and lakes bordering on this state so far as such rivers or lakes shall form a common boundary to the state and any other state or territory now or hereafter to be formed, and bounded by the same; and the river Mississippi and the navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways and forever free, as well to the inhabitants of the state as to the citizens of the United States, without any tax, impost or duty therefor.”
Namekagon Portage case study

Attorney General of Wisconsin — Opinion

June 16, 1986

“The Namekagon Portage Trail; Words and Phrases; The ‘Namekagon Portage Trail’ is not impressed with a public trust under article IX, section 1 of the Wisconsin Constitution.”

“Its commercial use probably was abandoned well over 100 years ago, and most of its path now is privately owned.”
James Michael Gordon a.k.a. Makoons (Little Bear)

JAMES MICHAEL GORDON
LITTLE BEAR MA KOONTS
1888 – 1963

Makoons Gordon of Ojibwe ancestry was from Red Cliff. He was born in 1888. Makoons received his education and training at Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania. He left that school as an electrical engineer. Makoons returned to Red Cliff and Bayfield to marry Elizabeth Cadotte in November of 1915. The Gordons had nine children. Makoons served in World War I as a soldier in the U.S. Army. After returning from the war, Makoons became an active member of American Legion Post 49.

In 1934, Makoons undertook an adventure few would attempt. He decided to travel by canoe from Bayfield, Wisconsin to Miami, Florida to attend the National American Legion Convention. Makoons built a birch bark canoe which would serve as his only form of transportation on a waterways trip to Florida.

On July 26th, 1934, Makoons launched his canoe from the shores of Lake Superior. He traveled by rivers, lakes and portages from northern Wisconsin to southern Florida in 83 days. On October 20th, 1934, Makoons fulfilled a dream. He fulfilled a dream and completed an amazing journey when he paddled into Miami Harbor to cheers from the crowd that lined the shore. Makoons Little Bear’s perseverance is an inspiration to those who follow him.
Descendants of William Baker (early mail carrier)
Marvin’s 40-foot birchbark canoe circa 1976
Washington, D.C. delegation
Miigwetch