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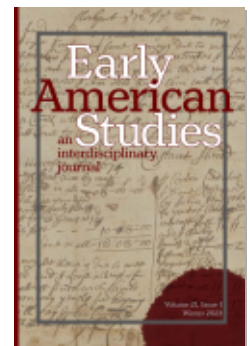
Land, Fur, and Copper: The Union of Settler Colonialism and
Industrial Capitalism in the Great Lakes Region, 1815–1842

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Land, Fur, and Copper

The Union of Settler Colonialism and Industrial Capitalism in the Great Lakes Region, 1815–1842

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ABSTRACT This article examines the relationship between settler colonialism and the rise of mineral-intensive industrial manufacturing in the United States. Land expropriated from Anishinaabe nations in what is currently the Upper Peninsula of the state of Michigan was one of the largest sources of copper for nineteenth-century U.S. industrial capitalists. The U.S. takeover of mineral-rich Anishinaabe land reflects the early union of settler colonial ambitions for the Great Lakes region with an emerging political economy of national self-sufficiency by way of continental supplies of raw materials typically imported from overseas. After the War of 1812, U.S. officials imagined the transformation of Anishinaabewaki into the material basis of an independent U.S. copper industry. Accordingly, they employed geologists to conduct fieldwork within Indigenous territories to help guide and facilitate the process of treaty making. However, the authority of the United States remained weak where they had little control over commerce and could not depend on the pressures of encroaching settler populations. Only by granting and enforcing a trade monopoly with the American Fur Company were U.S. leaders able to make inroads toward their goals of acquiring territorial control over the raw materials of industrial capitalism and dispossessing the Anishinaabeg.

In the decades following the U.S. Civil War, North American mineral resources became the crucial raw materials powering the global economic ascendancy of U.S. industrial manufacturing.¹ In this essay, I trace the origins

1. For a synthetic account of the economic historiography, see Edward Barbier, *Scarcity and Frontiers: How Economies Have Developed through Natural Resource Exploitation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 394–402. For an overview of scholarship on the rise of the United States as a global industrial and imperial power, see Sven Beckert, “American Danger: United States Empire, Eurafica, and the

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of some of those materials. Land expropriated from Anishinaabe communities living on the western half of the Upper Peninsula of what is today the state of Michigan was one of the largest sources of mined copper in the nineteenth-century United States.² It constituted at least three-quarters of the total copper output in the United States until the rise of large-scale copper-mining industries in Montana and the North American Southwest in the 1880s and remained at least one-quarter of the total as late as 1907. By then the United States accounted for well over half the world's total output of copper and nearly half its total consumption.³ While it is hardly new to link the territorial and market expansions of the United States, it is now time, as the historian Brian Delay argued, "to move beyond that general insight and attend in detail to the intertwined and contingent histories of Indian relations and commodity exports."⁴ I follow Delay's lead and ask: How and when did U.S. leaders come

Territorialization of Industrial Capitalism, 1870–1950," *American Historical Review* 122, no. 4 (2017): 1137–70; Stefan Link and Noam Maggor, "The United States as a Developing Nation: Revisiting the Peculiarities of American History," *Past and Present* 246, no. 1 (2020): 269–306.

2. *Anishinaabe* (plural *Anishinaabeg*) is a collective term that refers to Indigenous peoples who also identify as Ojibweg, Odawaag, and Boodewaadamiig. These Anishinaabe names are frequently anglicized in historical sources as Chippewas, Ottawas, and Potawatomi. I will be using the term *Anishinaabeg* throughout this article except where it makes sense to be more specific or when quoting historical sources. For the spelling of words in Anishinaabemowin (Anishinaabe language), I have followed the Ojibwe People's Dictionary, <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>. See relevant citations for the source of the spelling of the names of Anishinaabe individuals. On Anishinaabe identity and Anishinaabewaki (Anishinaabe homeland), see Michael J. Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Brenda J. Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York: Viking, 2012); Gerald Robert Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa: Narrative Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

3. Charles K. Hyde, *Copper for America: The United States Copper Industry from Colonial Times to the 1990s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 42, 66–67; William Bryam Gates Jr., *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars: An Economic History of the Michigan Copper Mining Industry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), vii; Christopher Schmitz, "The Changing Structure of the World Copper Market, 1870–1939," *Journal of European Economic History* 26, no. 2 (1997): 302–6, 319.

4. Brian Delay, "Indian Politics, Empire, and the History of American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 5 (2015): 938. See also Alexandra Harmon, Colleen O'Neill, and Paul C. Rosier, "Interwoven Economic Histories: American Indians in a Capitalist America," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (2011): 698–722. Emilie Connolly observes that "historians of the early republic all too often overlook how Indigenous peoples figured in the nation's political economy." Emilie Connolly,

to believe that Anishinaabe land contained an abundance of valuable minerals? How were they and their land incorporated into an emerging political economy of continental industrialization? How was U.S. sovereignty exercised over land and resources where it was previously contested or nonexistent?

Integrating the history of U.S. industrial development with the history of continental expropriation requires that we reckon with certain influential interpretations of the origins of U.S. mineral resource abundance. To explain the rapid expansion of the nineteenth-century U.S. industrial mining sector, several scholars have foregrounded state investments in science and technology and the professionalization of certain scientific disciplines. They have done so, however, without engaging with the entanglement of science with capitalist and colonial developments in North America. Similarly, historians have credited Michigan's first state geologist, Douglass Houghton, with providing crucial confirmation that an abundance of copper existed within the Upper Peninsula in the year before U.S. officials pressured the Anishinaabeg to cede their land at the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. This interpretation does not question the power of U.S. officials to successfully acquire Indigenous territory and instead emphasizes the need for a scientist to provide a positive and professional recommendation about the value and extent of its mineral resources. These histories generally discuss neither the details of the treaty itself nor the history of U.S.-Anishinaabe relations. Instead, the treaty appears as a virtually inevitable product resulting from a swell of extractive enthusiasm among settler colonists generated by new knowledge of the wealth buried within Indigenous lands. The authors of a recent survey of Michigan history stated this view succinctly: "In 1841, Douglass Houghton made a report that changed the course of Michigan's economic, political, and social development."⁵

"Panic, State Power, and Chickasaw Dispossession," *Journal of the Early Republic* 40, no. 4 (2020): 684. For a similar reflection, see Claudio Saunt, "Financing Dispossession: Stocks, Bonds, and the Deportation of Native Peoples in the Antebellum United States," *Journal of American History* 106, no. 2 (2019): 315.

5. Bruce A. Rubenstein and Lawrence E. Ziewacz, *Michigan: A History of the Great Lakes State*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 75 (quote). See also T. A. Rickard, *A History of American Mining* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1932), 35–36; Gates, *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars*, 2; Robert James Hybels, "The Lake Superior Copper Fever, 1841–47," *Michigan History* 34, no. 2 (1950): 97–98, 104; Otis Young, "Origins of the American Copper Industry," *Journal of the Early Republic* 3 (1983): 136; David J. Krause, *The Making of a Mining District: Keweenaw Native Copper, 1500–1870* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 122, 132–36; Hyde, *Copper for America*, 32–33; Larry D. Lankton, *Hollowed Ground: Copper Mining and*

In reality, Michigan's future depended less on Houghton's geological report than on the capacity of the settler state to acquire the territories of Indigenous nations. As other scholars have shown, the land famed for its copper rocks, like much of North America, remained in the control of Indigenous communities well into the nineteenth century.⁶ Residing within Anishinaabewaki, the homeland of the Anishinaabe peoples, Anishinaabe *doodemag* (bands) along the southern shore of *Gichigamiing* (Lake Superior) deployed numerous strategies to undermine efforts by the United States to exercise sovereignty over their land or relocate them. Anishinaabe *ogimaag* (leaders) at the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe consented only to lease their land for mining and were careful to ensure they retained the rights to live, hunt, fish, and gather where they were. Nevertheless, in the following decade U.S. officials attempted to use the treaty as justification for their forced removal to Minnesota, a scheme that ended in the tragic death of at least four hundred Anishinaabe people. By 1854, the Anishinaabeg had successfully organized a coalition opposing removal and used newly surveyed iron ore deposits as leverage to secure permanent reservations within Anishinaabewaki. These reservations, however, did not include the lands rich with copper ore. For this reason, especially when combined with the gross inequities that emerged from the subsequent mining industries and the cultural and spiritual significance of copper to many Ojibwe people living on the Upper Peninsula, the

Community Building on Lake Superior, 1840s–1990s (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 12–13; Noam Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism: Frontiers of Wealth and Populism in America's First Gilded Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 40. This interpretation of the origins of Michigan copper mining has been picked up and repeated by economic historians arguing for the significance of a "knowledge economy" to U.S. industrial development. See, for example, Paul David and Gavin Wright, "Increasing Returns and the Genesis of American Resource Abundance," *Industrial and Corporate Change* 6, no. 2 (1997): 203–45; Karen Clay, "Natural Resources and Economic Outcomes," in Paul Webb Rhode, Joshua L. Rosenbloom, and David F. Weiman, eds., *Economic Evolution and Revolution in Historical Time* (Stanford: Stanford Economic and Finance, 2011), 27–50; Gavin Wright, "The USA as a Case Study in Resource-Based Development," in Marc Badia-Miró, Vincente Pinilla, and Henry Willebald, eds., *Natural Resources and Economic Growth: Learning from History* (London: Routledge, 2015), 119–39. For a recent critique of scholarship tying U.S. industrial development to modernization, see Link and Maggor, "The United States as a Developing Nation." On the entanglement of science and capitalism, see Lukas Rieppel, Eugenia Lean, and William Deringer, "The Entangled Histories of Science and Capitalism," *Osiris* 33, no. 1 (2018): 1–24.

6. Michael Witgen, "The Native New World and Western North America," *Western Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2012): 292–99.

Ojibwe historian Erik Redix concluded that the acquisition of this territory was “tantamount to robbery.”⁷

The U.S. takeover of mineral-rich Anishinaabe land reflected not a new scientific discovery of subterranean resources but, rather, the evolving strategies of the United States to expropriate the wealth of Indigenous nations. Scholars who have centered new geological knowledge as the key driver behind the U.S. acquisition of new industrial raw materials have obscured the broader settler colonial contexts in which American geologists operated. To explain how the United States came to possess the raw materials needed

7. Erik M. Redix, *The Murder of Joe White: Ojibwe Leadership and Colonialism in Wisconsin* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), chap. 2 (quote at 59); Child, *Holding Our World Together*, chap. 3; Michael J. Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 327–37; Robert Doherty, “Old-Time Origins of Modern Sovereignty: State-Building among the Keweenaw Bay Ojibway, 1832–1854,” *American Indian Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2007): 165–87; Robert Doherty, “‘We Don’t Want Them to Hold Their Hands over Our Heads’: The Economic Strategies of the L’anse Chippewas, 1830–1860,” *Michigan Historical Review* 20, no. 2 (1994): 47–70; Robert H. Keller, “America’s Native Sweet: Chippewa Treaties and the Right to Harvest Maple Sugar,” *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1989): 117–35; James M. McClurken, “Ottawa Adaptive Strategies to Indian Removal,” *Michigan Historical Review* 12, no. 1 (1986): 39–42. On Anishinaabe leadership practices at this time, see Cary Miller, *Ojibwa: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760–1845* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010). On U.S. removal efforts and the creation of reservations in Anishinaabewaki, see also John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), chap. 6; Charles E. Cleland, “Preliminary Report of the Ethnohistorical Basis of the Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering Rights of the Mille Lacs Chippewa,” in James M. McClurken, ed., *Fish in the Lakes, Wild Rice, and Game in Abundance: Testimony on Behalf of Mille Lacs Ojibwe Hunting and Fishing Rights* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 1–140; Bruce M. White, “Regional Context of the Removal Order of 1850,” in McClurken, *Fish in the Lakes*, 141–328; Ronald N. Satz, “Chippewa Treaty Rights: The Reserved Rights of Wisconsin’s Chippewa Indians in Historical Perspective,” *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 79, no. 1 (1991): 1–209; James A. Clifton, “Wisconsin Death March: Explaining the Extremes in Old Northwest Indian Removal,” *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 75 (1987): 1–39. On the cultural and economic significance of copper, see Erik Redix, “‘Our Hope and Our Protection’: Misko-Biiwaabik (Copper) and Tribal Sovereignty in Michigan,” *American Indian Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2017): 224–49; Bernard C. Peters, “Wa-Bish-Kee-Pe-Nas and the Chippewa Reverence for Copper,” *Michigan Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (1989): 47–60. For an estimate of the wealth gained by the United States from exploiting the natural resources of Anishinaabe lands, see David R. Wrone, “The Economic Impact of the 1837 and 1842 Chippewa Treaties,” *American Indian Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1993): 329–40.

for the expansive growth of the U.S. copper industry, this article situates the search for industrial raw materials within the converging political economies of settler colonialism and industrial capitalism. Leading U.S. officials were convinced that the copper in Anishinaabe land could supply the expanding industries of the settler state decades before Houghton's 1841 report. In the 1820s, the federal government employed Henry Rowe Schoolcraft as a geologist and Indian Agent on the Upper Peninsula to determine the profitability of extracting the region's mineral resources and the ease of dispossessing Indigenous inhabitants of their land. In subsequent reports, publications, and testimonials, he persuaded additional U.S. leaders that the region was abundant with mineable copper. Dispossession, however, remained impracticable in the short term. Where the United States fell short of realizing its settler colonial ambitions to replace Indigenous homelands with settler homelands, it expanded its influence by operating as a traditional colonial power and politically subordinating Indigenous peoples to exploit their labor and land. In their struggle to colonize the Anishinaabeg of the Upper Peninsula, U.S. leaders pooled their resources with the increasingly influential American Fur Company (AFC). When the AFC's investments in the labor, fur, and fish of the region evaporated at the height of a national financial crisis, the U.S. government leveraged the accumulated debt between traders and Anishinaabe communities to simultaneously pressure the sale of Indigenous land and bail out the dying fur industry. The dispossession of Anishinaabe mineral wealth proceeded not with a new geological report but with the changes in political power associated with the collapse of the fur trade.⁸

While dispossession is central to both the histories of settler colonialism and the transition to industrial capitalism in the United States, specific links

8. For the argument that settler colonialism is eliminatory and access to territory is its primary motivation, see Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409. For the distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism, see Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing: Settler Colonial Studies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–12. Michael Witgen argued that this manner of settling debt claims belonged to a broader "political economy of plunder" in the Great Lakes region, during which "government officials, white settlers, and traders with kinship and business ties to Native peoples or jurisdiction over them" secured power and money from the continued presence of Native peoples at the same time as the state "negotiated the terms of their colonization." Michael Witgen, "Seeing Red: Race, Citizenship, and Indigeneity in the Old Northwest," *Journal of the Early Republic* 38, no. 4 (2018): 596–97. For more on how the United States operated as both a settler colonial state and traditional exogenous colonial power, see Witgen, *Seeing Red*.

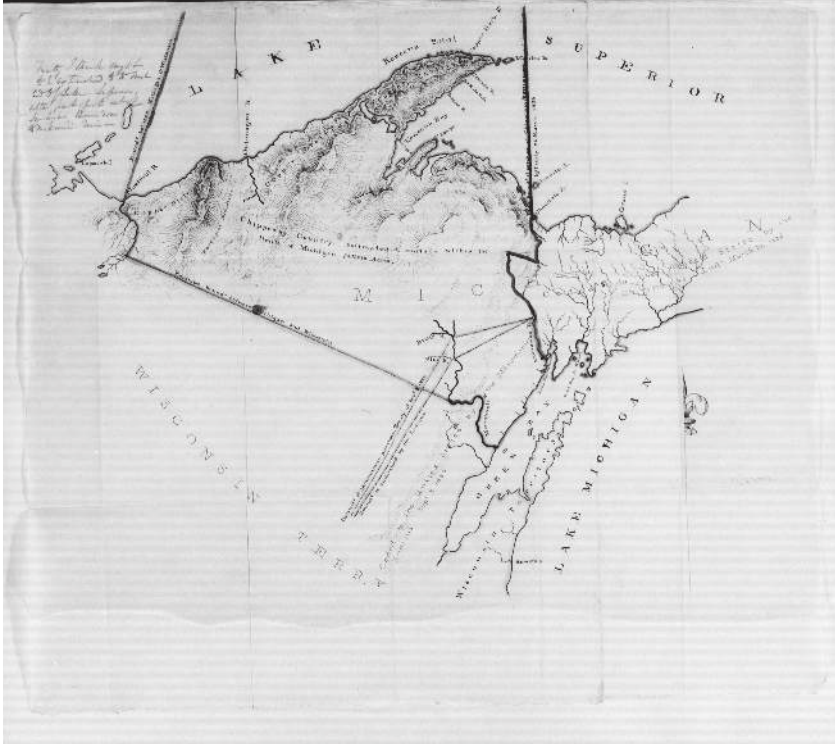


Figure 1. Early sketch of the borders of the land that U.S. officials wanted the Anishinaabeg to cede at the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. Before the treaty, these borders would be significantly expanded into Wisconsin Territory in accordance with the geological information communicated to Robert Stuart by Douglass Houghton about the possible extent of the copper district. Included in a letter from Stuart to John C. Spencer. Robert Stuart to John C. Spencer, July 27, 1842, Michigan Superintendency, 1824–1851: 1842–1845, NAM, roll 425, frame 425). Available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164041602) at www.archives.gov.

between these literatures remain obscure.⁹ Historians have shown how the settler colonial aspiration of eliminating Indigenous people to acquire their

9. On the different uses of dispossession in scholarship on settler colonialism and capitalism respectively, see Robert Nichols, *Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020); Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 1–24; Nicholas A. Brown, “The Logic of Settler Accumulation in a Landscape of Perpetual Vanishing,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 1–26.

territory was firmly embedded in the political economy of the early United States, particularly in the contexts of land speculation and commercial agriculture. The sale of dispossessed land to settlers constituted one of the largest sources of federal revenue at the same time that international circuits of financial capital and state coercion were facilitating the transformation of Native land into the plantation lands of slavery's capitalism. The same amount of scrutiny has not yet been applied to the relationship between Indigenous dispossession and the rise of mineral-intensive industrial manufacturing. This article locates an early conjunction between the ambitions of the settler state and an emerging industrial political economy in Anishinaabewaki during the three decades after the War of 1812. Linking dispossession to visions of national industrial strength, U.S. officials imagined mineral-rich Anishinaabe land as the territorial basis for the establishment of a self-sufficient U.S. copper industry and the capture of overseas markets.¹⁰

THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY

The rise of U.S. industrial mining did not reflect inexorable capitalist development, led by the accomplishments of heroic actors; rather, it belonged to a contingent history of territorial conflict and political contestation. In 1972, the business historian Alfred Chandler Jr. suggested that it was “the increased need for copper and brass”—or market demand—that led “to the opening of the first large copper mines in the United States,” located in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. To be sure, U.S. copper consumption grew significantly in the early and mid-nineteenth century. Copper was used to manufacture an array of products—from vats, stills, and kettles to coinage, roofing, and brassware. Most of it, however, went into the outfitting and sheathing of wooden trade and military vessels, railroad locomotive manufacturing, and, toward the

10. On settler colonialism in the early United States, see Jeffrey Ostler, “Locating Settler Colonialism in Early American History,” *WMQ* 76, no. 3 (2019): 444; Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires and Land in Early Modern North America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 405–15; Michael Witgen, “A Nation of Settlers: The Early American Republic and the Colonization of the Northwest Territory,” *WMQ* 76, no. 3 (2019): 391–98. On slavery’s capitalism, see Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery’s Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1–27. On the reach and efficacy of settler colonialism in early North America, see Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, “Settler Colonialism in Early American History: Introduction,” *WMQ* 76, no. 3 (2019): 361–68; Daniel K. Richter, “His Own, Their Own: Settler Colonialism, Native Peoples, and Imperial Balances of Power in Eastern North America, 1660–1715,” in Ignacio Gallup-Díaz, ed., *The World of Colonial America: An Atlantic Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 209–33.

end of the century, electrical industries. But increasing consumption is an insufficient explanation for the rise of the U.S. copper-mining industry. Expanding domestic production of raw materials from seized Indigenous territories was not the only option available to U.S. policymakers. Between 1790 and 1840, the United States had no significant domestic source of copper and met changes in demand by steadily increasing imports from sources overseas. Imports increased until the mid-1850s. But then they were replaced by ore extracted from the continent, which came overwhelmingly from Anishinaabe land until late in the century. To understand the origins of a U.S. copper industry whose raw materials were not imported but mined by settler colonists at the heart of the continent, we have to trace the formulation and execution of a new political economy of territorial industrialization.¹¹

Anglo-Americans were familiar with and interested in the existence of copper near Lake Superior long before the United States had the means to expropriate it. As early as seven thousand years ago, Indigenous peoples discovered, mined, and worked the copper of the western Lake Superior basin and traded it through vast North American networks.¹² Since the sixteenth century, Europeans and Euro-Americans had written travel narratives, geographies, and natural histories describing the copper that they saw on the southern shore and that was possessed by the Indigenous peoples they depended on for navigation and trade.¹³ The U.S. government first became interested in investigating the metallic resources of Anishinaabe

11. Alfred D. Chandler, "Anthracite Coal and the Beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in the United States," *Business History Review* 46, no. 2 (1972): 174. Chandler similarly overemphasized consumer demand for cheaper coal in the rise of the anthracite coal industry, the principal subject of the article. For this critique, see Sean Patrick Adams, *Old Dominion, Industrial Commonwealth: Coal, Politics, and Economy in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 49–50, 250n3. On copper consumption, see Hyde, *Copper for America*, 7–16, 27–28 (table 1.5), 42, 49, 66; Gates, *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars*, 7, 197–201 (tables 6–8). On the territorialization of industrial capitalism, see Beckert, "American Danger." On the territorialization of the global copper industry after the U.S. Civil War, see Chris Evans and Olivia Saunders, "A World of Copper: Globalizing the Industrial Revolution, 1830–70," *Journal of Global History* 10, no. 1 (2015): 18–26.

12. Susan R. Martin, *Wonderful Power: The Story of Ancient Copper Working in the Lake Superior Basin* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999); Kathleen L. Ehrhardt, "Copper Working Technologies, Contexts of Use, and Social Complexity in the Eastern Woodlands of Native North America," *Journal of World Prehistory* 22, no. 3 (2009): 213–35.

13. Krause, *The Making of a Mining District*, chap. 1.

lands when the costs of imported copper doubled between 1791 and 1798 during the wars of the French Revolution.¹⁴ Congress responded by issuing a resolution on April 16, 1800, authorizing President John Adams to send an agent to collect information “relative to the copper mines on the south side of Lake Superior, and to ascertain whether the Indian title to such lands as might be required for the use of the United States . . . and if so, the terms on which the same can be extinguished.”¹⁵ However, preparations and delays outlasted the congressional authorization for the expedition. By late March 1801, the new president, Thomas Jefferson, had terminated the endeavor. Years later, in January 1818, Jefferson explained his decision to the Baltimore merchant and copper manufacturer Levi Hollingsworth. Hollingsworth had heard of an “abundance of Copper ore” on Lake Superior and wrote to Jefferson asking if he knew anything about the affair.¹⁶ Jefferson explained that he suppressed the expedition because he thought the whole venture, including the digging and transportation of the ore, too costly.¹⁷

U.S. leaders took greater interest in investigating the resources of Anishinaabe land during the years surrounding the War of 1812. This occurred in conjunction with the emergence of a National Republican agenda for economic independence. During the Napoleonic Wars, the United States experienced a commercial boom as American merchants capitalized on disrupted European economies. But commerce came to a standstill between December 1807 and March 1809 when President Jefferson forbade merchants to leave American waters as part of his experiment in commercial coercion following a British attack on a “neutral” U.S. vessel. Republicans defended the restrictive measures by promoting the benefits of domestic manufacturing

14. Rising copper prices are evident in Anne Bezanson, Robert D. Gray, and Miriam Hussey, *Wholesale Prices in Philadelphia 1784–1861*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1837), 54.

15. Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, vol. 2 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 87. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sources often use the term *mine* to refer to a perceived mineral outcropping or deposit rather than an ongoing extractive operation.

16. Levi Hollingsworth to Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 31, 1818, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-12-02-0337> (hereafter FONA).

17. Thomas Jefferson to Levi Hollingsworth, Feb. 12, 1818, FONA, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-12-02-0357>. See also Samuel L. Mitchill, *A Discourse on the Character and Services of Thomas Jefferson, More Especially as A Promoter of Natural and Physical Science* (New York: G. & C. Carvill, 1826), 24; Russell M. Magnaghi, “Aborted Cooper Expedition to Lake Superior Country, 1800,” *Inland Seas* 36, no. 2 (1980): 82–85.

and an integrated home market. A political economy of self-sufficiency, based on the encouragement of industrial growth and the integration of the resources of a territorially expanded home market, steadily gained currency as a corrective to ceaseless Atlantic commercial disruptions and as a solution to the threats of commercial dominance by France, Spain, and Britain in the west and of slave rebellions in the south. The Pennsylvania political economist Tench Coxe, an early and influential proponent of this view, wrote extensively about the benefits of cultivating and incorporating internal resources to reduce U.S. dependence on a variety of imports. Over the course of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a growing cohort of Republicans agreed that to achieve economic independence the government needed to cultivate industrial strength and employ the resources of the continent.¹⁸

With this new political economic vision came greater attention to continental wealth not yet exploited by the United States. In December 1808, Kentucky representative and leading Republican voice Matthew Lyon extended Coxian political economy to the copper in Anishinaabe land. Lyon wrote to Jefferson, “At a time like the present . . . when every American wishes to realize to the World that we are an Independant people, I take the liberty of reminding you of the Copper ore on the South side of Lake Superior.” He argued that using Anishinaabe resources for manufacturing would support the pursuit of national economic independence and urged Jefferson to send knowledgeable agents to “judge where the Ore may be worked to advantage” and to identify an appropriate location to establish a settlement. If such a survey proved favorable, the consequent copper “would add to the prosperity of this growing nation, & prove a Strong pillar in the fabrick [*sic*] of her real Independance [*sic*].” Lyon reminded Jefferson of the previous administration’s willingness to explore the resources of the region at a time when there was far less fear of losing the ability to import copper from the

18. Martin Öhman, “Perfecting Independence: Tench Coxe and the Political Economy of Western Development,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31, no. 3 (2011): 401, 404–6, 412, 417; Drew R. McCoy, “An Unfinished Revolution: The Quest for Economic Independence in the Early Republic,” in Jack P. Greene, ed., *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 138–40; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 22–23; John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34–36; Andrew Shankman, “John Quincy Adams and National Republicanism,” in David Waldstreicher, ed., *A Companion to John Adams and John Quincy Adams* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 263–68. See also John R. Van Atta, “Western Lands and the Political Economy of Henry Clay’s American System, 1819–1832,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 4 (2001): 633–65.

mines of Britain. The embargo, he argued, made a survey of the mineral resources of Anishinaabe land imperative.¹⁹

Jefferson did not act on Lyon's suggestion, however, perhaps because he still feared the costs of such development. Regardless, the idea was taking hold among U.S. leaders that Anishinaabe land could become a source of raw materials that would generate revenue consonant with a new political economy emphasizing U.S. economic independence. This is evident in the interest generated by another proposal targeting these lands and resources. In 1810, Francis Le Baron, a physician and trader stationed at Michilimackinac, in the straits linking Lakes Michigan and Huron, wrote to Secretary of War William Eustis that during his long residence near the southern shore he had heard frequent accounts of "the unquestionable signs of the existence of Mines." With the encouragement of the government, he argued, the land could become "an inexhaustible source of wealth . . . and unparalleled prosperity to this part of Our western possessions." Le Baron urged U.S. government support for a three-month exploratory voyage to ascertain what advantage may be derived from working the mines at a time when "that valuable & necessary Metal is growing daily in greater demand, & the power of procuring it is daily more difficult & uncertain." Persuaded, Eustis asked Tench Coxe to find someone familiar with mineralogy in Philadelphia to assist Le Baron.²⁰

Le Baron's petition and the congressional response illustrates not only the growing U.S. interest in using western mineral resources for national economic development but also how congressional leaders understood their limited influence over the region. Le Baron did not receive the federal assistance he requested, and the looming war with Great Britain forced his evacuation from the area. But he did not give up. Writing from New York after the war, Le Baron sent a memorial to Congress requesting the right to open and work any copper mines he might discover on the southern shore or nearby islands and insisting, once again, that "with proper arrangement,

19. Matthew Lyon to Thomas Jefferson, Dec. 24, 1808, FONA, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9394>.

20. Francis Le Baron to the Secretary of War, Sept. 30, 1810, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 28 vols. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942), 10:328 (quotes) (hereafter *Territorial Papers*); Secretary of War to Tench Coxe, Nov. 10, 1810, *Territorial Papers*, 10:336. See also Russell M. Magnaghi, "Pre-Statehood Perceptions: Michigan's Upper Peninsula," in Russell M. Magnaghi and Michael T. Marsden, eds., *A Sense of Place: Michigan's Upper Peninsula: Essays in Honor of William and Margery Vandament* (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1997), 50.

extensive Mines of this valuable Metal may be opened, & worked, to advantage, a circumstance that would contribute greatly to the prosperity & independance [*sic*] of these United States.”²¹ He also argued that the creation of a mining industry on the southern shore would encourage greater settlement in the Great Lakes region and thereby facilitate U.S. expansion. The memorial was referred to a select committee led by Massachusetts senator Joseph Bradley Varnum, whose sons Joseph and Jacob operated trading posts in the Great Lakes region. Congress responded a month later with a bill that gave Le Baron the right to open and work any copper mine he discovered on the southern shore of Lake Superior, provided that he first “obtained, by fair purchase, at his own expense, under the directions of the President of the United States, all claims of Indians to the mines aforesaid.”²² The bill was passed on for a second reading, but the Senate also tasked Le Baron with answering eleven inquiries about the region’s Native inhabitants, the extent of the land they possessed, the number of already existing U.S. settlements, and the scope of U.S. participation in the fur trade. As they well understood, U.S. power in the Great Lakes—and thus the future of copper mining on the southern shore—was contingent on the pressure of settler populations and commercial dominance. Le Baron relayed back that the “United States has not extinguished the Indian title to one acre of land North and west of the Michilimackinac” and that “There are no [U.S.] settlements whatsoever,” except for a small village on the St. Marys River. Moreover, there were virtually no U.S. citizens engaged in the fur trade. The lackluster U.S. presence contrasted with the “most valuable trade” carried on by British traders, and the fact that “The Chippawa Nation posses [*sic*] exclusively all the Country from the South Shore of Lake Superior to the waters that empties themselves into the Mississippi.” Presumably on the basis of Le Baron’s response, the bill was defeated in February 1817 after a second reading in the Senate.²³

21. Memorial to Congress by Francis Le Baron, Dec. 24, 1816, *Territorial Papers*, 17:290.

22. U.S. Congress, Senate, A Bill Authorizing the Opening and Working of Copper Mines on Lake Superior, and for Other Purposes, S. 20, 14th Cong., 1st sess., Feb. 6, 1816, *Territorial Papers*, 17:296. On the Varnums, see David Andrew Nichols, *Engines of Diplomacy: Indian Trading Factories and the Negotiation of American Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 103–7; John Marshall Varnum, *The Varnums of Dracutt* (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1907), 235–41, 247–48.

23. Francis Le Baron’s Answers to Queries on the Copper Mines and the Fur Trade, Dec. 24, 1816, *Territorial Papers*, 17:291–92 (quote). See also Magnaghi, “Pre-Statehood Perceptions: Michigan’s Upper Peninsula,” 50; Russell M. Magnaghi, “Le

The early nineteenth-century emergence of a political economy of industrial self-sufficiency made the survey and national incorporation of Anishinaabe mineral resources appealing to many U.S. officials. However, they did not yet have the means to pursue expropriation. While the United States claimed sovereignty and ownership over the Northwest Territory upon its surrender by Great Britain in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, in reality, as other historians have shown, U.S. authority over much of the Great Lakes region was tenuous or nonexistent and depended—like that of earlier colonial powers—on “the cooperation of fur traders, their mixed-race and multiracial families, and their kinship and economic connections with Native political leaders.”²⁴ In his effort to persuade the government to support the survey and mining of copper, Le Baron provided information that both reflected and validated the anxieties of the federal government about the limitations of U.S. sovereignty in the Northwest Territory and the need to exert political control through trade. Although the bill supporting Le Baron’s proposal was ultimately defeated, it set a pattern. White Americans interested in exploiting the mineral resources of the Anishinaabeg would continually frame their efforts as a quest for territorial control, industrial strength, and national economic independence. In the three decades following the War of 1812, the desire of U.S.

Baron’s Attempt at Exploiting Upper Peninsula Copper,” *Harlow’s Wooden Man* 16, no. 3 (1980): 5–7.

24. Witgen, “Seeing Red,” 582. On the limitations of U.S. empire in the early nineteenth-century Great Lakes region, see also Witgen, “A Nation of Settlers”; Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 325–31; Colin G. Calloway, “The End of an Era: British-Indian Relations in the Great Lakes Region after the War of 1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 12, no. 2 (1986): 1–4; and Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015). Scholarship on the history of kinship and the Great Lakes fur trade is immense. See, among others, Susan Sleeper-Smith, “Cultures of Exchange in a North-Atlantic World,” in Susan Sleeper-Smith, ed., *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), xvii–lci; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); Child, *Holding Our World Together*, chap. 2; Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie Du Chien, 1750–1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737–1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Jacqueline Peterson, “Many Roads to Red River: Métis Genesis in the Great Lakes Region, 1680–1815,” in Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 37–71.

officials to secure continental supplies of industrial raw materials for national industries converged with their broader efforts to undermine Indigenous political power and accelerate dispossession in the Great Lakes region.

SETTLER COLONIAL ASPIRATIONS

The settler colonial aspirations of eliminating Indigenous peoples and acquiring their territory was central to the founding of the United States. In the eighteenth century, for example, white Americans rejected British restrictions on western settlement and land speculation; they undermined Native nations' control over their homelands during the Revolutionary War; and they authored founding documents providing the legal and political framework for transforming Indigenous lands into white property in perpetuity.²⁵ In addition, building on conceptions of labor and property rooted in European liberalism, congressional committees in the 1780s produced ordinances that envisaged a steady stream of revenue and credit from the orderly sale of what they perceived to be a wild and unsettled Northwest Territory. These included novel measures for the creation of territories administered by the federal government and their eventual transformation into independent states. Indigenous peoples were conceived of as holding a limited title or a right of occupancy over land claimed by the United States, were denied the right to sell their land to other nations, and were threatened with “just and lawful war” if they resisted U.S. demands for land cessions. After the War of 1812, they were codified into U.S. law and policy as occupants of land already owned by the United States by right of discovery.²⁶

25. Ostler, “Locating Settler Colonialism,” 443–45.

26. Witgen, “A Nation of Settlers”; Jeffrey Ostler, “Just and Lawful War’ as Genocidal War in the (United States) Northwest Ordinance and Northwest Territory, 1787–1832,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 1 (2016): 1–20; Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018), chap. 1; Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019); Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), chaps. 4–5; Robert J. Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 2. On the early U.S. imperial state, see Gautham Rao, “The New Historiography of the Early Federal Government: Institutions Contexts, and the Imperial State,” *WMQ* 77, no. 1 (2020): 97–128. On the uptake of liberal political economy in the early United States, see John Lauritz Larson, “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 35, no. 1 (2015): 1–23, esp. 10. For Indigeneity in Adam Smith’s labor theory of value, see Manu Vimalassery, “The Wealth of the

The switch to Republican administrations at the turn of the century marked both the centering of western resources in U.S. political economic planning and the acceleration of efforts to strong-arm treaty cessions for a broader base of white farmers, land speculators, and enslavers. President Jefferson, for example, suggested that western traders should encourage Native people to become more indebted to federally funded trading posts (or “factories”) to provide necessary leverage during treaty negotiations. While often framed in terms of a “civilizing” mission, the aggressive tactics of the United States during these years made clear that the ultimate goal was to eliminate Indigenous peoples east of the Mississippi River. Over the course of Jefferson’s two terms, approximately 200,000 square miles of land were transferred via treaty into the “public domain” to be sold to settlers. Rapid dispossession generated organized resistance from a Native confederacy that called for the restoration of the political boundaries of 1783 and encouraged violent opposition to U.S. expansion. Many U.S. leaders interpreted the long-standing—and now reinvigorated—Indigenous resistance as the product of British influence. By the 1810s, this became a major grievance used to justify a new war with Britain and avoid the “containment” of U.S. expansion. The War of 1812 that followed saw a failed attempt to invade Canada and a successful disruption of the Native confederacy led by the Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa and his brother Tecumseh. During negotiations to end the war in 1814 at Ghent, Belgium (without Indigenous representatives), U.S. diplomats insisted that the British abandon their Indigenous allies to U.S. domination. The British agreed as long as the United States was silent on contentious maritime issues.²⁷

Natives: Toward a Critique of Settler Colonial Political Economy,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, nos. 3–4 (2013): 295–310.

27. D. A. Nichols, *Engines of Diplomacy*, 10; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 117–21, 136–47; Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 135, 141; David A. Nichols, “US Indian Policy, 1783–1830,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History* (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.42>; Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783–1812* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), chaps. 9–10; Alan Taylor, “The War of 1812 and the Struggle for a Continent,” in Andrew Shankman, ed., *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for a Continent* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 246–47, 250–55, 257–59; Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 125–27, 411–14.

The end of the war meant neither the realization of U.S. sovereignty in the Northwest Territory nor the end of future hostilities. Leading U.S. officials like Lewis Cass, who served as governor of Michigan Territory between 1813 and 1831 and as secretary of war under President Andrew Jackson, sought the eradication of Indigenous territories and the expulsion of all Indigenous peoples from within the territorial boundaries claimed by the United States. But the Indigenous nations of the upper and western Great Lakes region felt the pressure of settler populations and the settler state later than did those in the Ohio River Valley and Michigan's lower peninsula. To better secure their tenuous grasp on these areas, prevent further hostilities, and ward off British influence over Indigenous nations, the federal government constructed new military and trading posts and restricted foreign trade. In 1816, they passed a law denying trading licenses to noncitizens and authorized the military to seize unauthorized goods. Cass felt sure that the British were going to renew their trading efforts after the war and would for years be haunted by a fear of a new and militant Native confederacy supported by the British. Cass was especially anxious about the Anishinaabeg around Lake Superior. In 1815, he reported to Secretary of War James Monroe that "a great proportion of the Ottawas and nearly the whole of the numerous Nation of the Chipeways are hostile. The tribes, who roam through the immense wilderness bordering upon Lake Superior, the Lakes Northwest of it and the Country between them and the Mississippi are under the immediate influence and controul [*sic*] of the British traders and Agents."²⁸ These fears were likely validated by the information provided to the Senate by the former trader from Michilimackinac, Francis Le Baron, in December 1816. Le Baron's letter confirmed the persistence of British trade on the southern shore and the virtual absence of U.S. traders. He also praised the absolute exclusion of foreign trade after the War of 1812, though he recognized that the government did not yet have the capacity to enforce the ban. Indeed, reports the next year confirmed that the law was ineffective. The worst losses of the war for Canada, Le Baron suggested, would not have occurred had the United States excluded foreign traders much earlier. Doing so would have "forced the Indians to feel their dependence on the U States . . . a sure pledge

28. Governor Cass to the Secretary of War, Feb. 17, 1815, *Territorial Papers*, 10:508 (quote); Witgen, *Seeing Red*, chap. 1; Taylor, "The War of 1812 and the Struggle for a Continent," 258–59; Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, 429–30; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 80–84, 96–97; Calloway, "The End of an Era," 6; Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 39–43.

for their fidelity.” The actions taken by many U.S. leaders over the following decades suggest they agreed with this assessment.²⁹

In the early nineteenth century, the United States facilitated the creation of a fur trade monopoly in the Great Lakes region to more effectively undermine Indigenous power, address the limitations of U.S. sovereignty, and access the wealth of Indigenous homelands. The prohibitions on foreign trade after the War of 1812 helped the American Fur Company (AFC), founded by John Jacob Astor, become a commercial monopoly in the Great Lakes region by the 1830s. Astor had urged the passage of the 1816 law excluding foreign traders, and many federal officials, in turn, supported the growth of the AFC because they believed it to be an effective instrument for severing British influence.³⁰ The nation was also deeply indebted to Astor for having helped finance the War of 1812 with discounted bonds. During the administration of President James Monroe, Astor became the United States’ leading creditor.³¹ By the early 1820s, federal support of the AFC included privatizing the trade by shutting down U.S. government-administered trading houses to eliminate any remaining competition. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri—and Astor’s former attorney—brought down the Office of Indian Trade using talking points from the chief AFC agent, Ramsay Crooks. The closure of federal trading houses in 1822 marked the AFC’s transformation into the unofficial commercial arm of the government.³²

NATIVE POWER AND TERRITORIAL SCIENCE

As a settler colonial state with growing industrial ambitions, the United States sought the elimination of Indigenous peoples from the Great Lakes region to access their mineral wealth. Where these ambitions fell short in the face of Indigenous sovereignty, the United States tried to weaken the autonomy of Indigenous nations and extract other forms of wealth as a colonial power. While the state “negotiated the terms of its colonization” in the Great Lakes region, U.S. officials actively collected information about

29. “Francis Le Baron’s Answers to Queries on the Copper Mines and the Fur Trade,” Dec. 24, 1816, *Territorial Papers*, 17:292, 294 (quote); Calloway, “The End of an Era,” 7.

30. John D. Haeger, *John Jacob Astor: Business and Finance in the Early Republic* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 191.

31. D. A. Nichols, *Engines of Diplomacy*, 10–11, 158; Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, 199; Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *John Jacob Astor: Business Man* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 725–27n57; Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 68, 80.

32. D. A. Nichols, *Engines of Diplomacy*, 159–71; Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, 207–13.

Anishinaabe natural resources to better inform their political and economic speculations.³³ In the summer of 1820, Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass led such an expedition into Anishinaabe territory. His objectives illustrate the conjunction of settler colonial aspirations with the new political economy of territorial industrialization. Cass was primarily concerned with obtaining the loyalty of Natives still partial to the British and extinguishing Native title to land at strategic locations to better police trade and facilitate future settlement in the Michigan Territory. On the Upper Peninsula, Cass intended his expedition to extinguish Native title to a tract of land on the northeastern edge of the peninsula for the construction of a military post at Sault Ste. Marie (Bow-e-ting), an important portage on the border with British Canada. He also intended to explore the economic significance of the region and requested someone knowledgeable about natural resources to accompany the expedition. Cass knew there was copper in the area. Among the six “political objects” of the journey was the examination of evidence for abundant copper on the southern shore of Lake Superior, including the documentation of outcroppings and the collecting of specimens for later testing. It also included a visit to the “Ontonagon Boulder,” a large mass of isolated copper made famous by numerous traveler accounts. Cass hoped to have it divided and removed for use in the navy. In anticipation, he proposed that the government also extinguish Native title to the land near the boulder so that a more complete examination could be conducted of the area “said to be rich in its mineral productions.”³⁴

Cass’s proposal reflected the priorities of the newly reformed War Department under the war hawk and South Carolina congressman John C. Calhoun. Calhoun, appointed secretary of war under President James Monroe, was left such postwar business as the naval disarmament of the Great Lakes and the fixing of the U.S.-Canada border.³⁵ Like Cass, Calhoun wanted to establish new military posts throughout the Northwest Territory, including at Sault Ste. Marie, to block off British channels of communication and enforce the prohibition on foreign trade. At the time, he also belonged to a new cohort of Republican nationalists promoting an active role for the federal government in developing the national economy, such as through internal improvements and the commercialization of the continent. Calhoun reorganized the War Department to meet these goals, including an overhaul of the

33. Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 148 (quote), 20–23, 215–16.

34. Lewis Cass to John C. Calhoun, Nov. 18, 1819, *American State Papers*, 2, *Indian Affairs*, 2:319; Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 339–44, 346.

35. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 96.

technical education received at the Military Academy at West Point to better support the increasing number of elaborate western expeditions to establish military outposts and collect information on topography, natural resources, and Indigenous peoples.³⁶

Lewis Cass was an early and consistent advocate for acquiring and developing the mineral resources of the Anishinaabeg. However, he often struggled to secure congressional support to extinguish Native title to land where the U.S. state remained weak. By January 1820, Calhoun had sanctioned Cass's exploratory tour but had not addressed Cass's proposal to extinguish Native title at the Upper Peninsula sites that Cass suggested. Cass wrote to William Woodbridge, Michigan's first congressional delegate, anxious about Calhoun's silence on this subject. He summarized the information in his earlier letter, hoping Woodbridge would communicate it to Calhoun: "I am particularly solicitous," he wrote, "that directions should be given for the extinction of the Indian title at the places stated in my letter to Mr. Calhoun," including at "the bed of copper upon Lake Superior." He explained that "at each of these points it is important with a view to their progressive growth in population, strength and resources, and to the future security and defence of this exposed frontier, that this cession of Indian title should be procured, and the land brought into market as speedily as practicable."³⁷ After Woodbridge reminded Calhoun of Cass's suggestion to extinguish Native title to "so much of the Lake Superior Country as may comprehend the bed of the Copper Ore," Calhoun finally addressed the subject.³⁸ He explained that the War Department had decided not to obtain any land from the Anishinaabeg

36. Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 70, 80–81, 91; John Lauritz Larson, *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 110, 127; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 83–84; A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 35–37. On Calhoun's "political metamorphosis" into a Jacksonian states' rights radical after 1825, see Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 174–77. On the relationship between science and the acquisition and commodification of territories in the early U.S. empire, see Conevery Bolton Valencius et al., "Science in Early America: Print Culture and the Sciences of Territoriality," *Journal of the Early Republic* 36, no. 1 (2016): 73–123; Cameron B. Strang, "Perpetual War and Natural Knowledge in the United States, 1775–1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 38, no. 3 (2018): 387–413.

37. Lewis Cass to William Woodbridge, Jan. 29, 1820, in Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States*, ed. Mentor L. Williams (1821; repr., East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1953), 307 (appendix B).

38. Delegate Woodbridge to the Secretary of War, Feb. 22, 1820, *Territorial Papers*, 11:4.

except “an inconsiderable cession” at Sault Ste. Marie for a military post. They feared that requesting too much Native title, especially at “remote points” like the southern shore, would generate dissatisfaction in Congress and undermine efforts to acquire Native land elsewhere.³⁹ In their piecemeal approach to the elimination of Indigenous peoples and territories, the United States had to carefully consider how to effectively mobilize its own limited resources.

The hesitance of the federal government to permit additional attempts to extinguish Native title on the Upper Peninsula did not reflect a disinterest in Anishinaabe mineral wealth. Instead, it was an implicit acknowledgment of the weakness of the authority of the United States in the upper Great Lakes. Indeed, the fact that many U.S. officials were still invested in the prospect of eventually acquiring Anishinaabe mineral resources is evident in their consistent support of scientific investigations. Thus, while Calhoun denied Cass’s request to attempt to dispossess the Anishinaabeg of their mineral-rich land, he nevertheless found “a gentleman of science and observation, and particularly skilled in mineralogy” to accompany Cass and “obtain a knowledge of the mineralogy of the country, as far as practicable.”⁴⁰ Calhoun selected the young Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, son of an upstate New York glass manufacturer. Schoolcraft’s reputation as a man of science had reached Calhoun through his 1819 publication on the lead-mining regions of the Mississippi Valley. Schoolcraft had sent copies of his book to those he thought might be able to secure him employment, including sending ornate editions to President Monroe and other prominent government officials.⁴¹ The secretary of war also selected the West Point graduate David B. Douglass to join the journey as topographer. In his introductory letter to Douglass, Cass provided an overview of the goals of the expedition that again emphasized the importance of examining the copper lands: “It has long been known that masses of virgin copper are found upon a small river flowing into Lake Superior, and specimens have been frequently brought from thence by the Indians, and sent into the United States to be assayed. A complete examination of this copper is an important object.”⁴²

39. John C. Calhoun to Lewis Cass, Apr. 5, 1820, *American State Papers*, 2, *Indian Affairs*, 2:227.

40. John C. Calhoun to Lewis Cass, Feb. 25, 1820, *American State Papers*, 2, *Indian Affairs*, 2:320.

41. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *A View of the Lead Mines of Missouri* (New York: C. Wiley, 1819); Richard G. Bremer, “Henry Rowe Schoolcraft: Explorer in the Mississippi Valley, 1818–1832,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 66, no. 1 (1982): 45.

42. Lewis Cass to Captain David B. Douglass, Mar. 17, 1820, in Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 310 (appendix B).

Owing to the weakness of U.S. authority and the challenging terrain, the Cass expedition was intensely dependent on the Anishinaabeg and only narrowly managed to progress their goals on the Upper Peninsula. To navigate Anishinaabewaki, the Cass expedition employed Anishinaabe canoes and recruited the assistance of at least nine Anishinaabe people, as well as twelve “french voyageurs well acquainted with this mode of travelling.”⁴³ In June 1820, Cass met with members of an Anishinaabe village on the side of the Saint Marys River claimed by the United States to carry out their plan to terminate Native title at Sault Ste. Marie. The ogimaag initially rejected Cass’s request to establish a post on their land. When Cass asserted that he did not need their consent, Sassaba, a young war leader of the Crane doodem, whose brother Waubejechawk was killed fighting the United States in the War of 1812, broke the meeting to gather a war party. Cass then threatened to invade the village, even though his own expeditionary party was vastly outnumbered, militarily weak, and clearly dependent on Native and Métis knowledge and technology. Moreover, the United States had not performed well in the upper Great Lakes during the recent war and had little to no political control over this part of the U.S.-Canada border. A prominent Anishinaabe woman, Ozhaawshkodewikwe (Green Prairie Woman), daughter of the influential ogimaa Waabojiig, sent her son to find the rival war leader Shingwaukonse (Little Pine), who also fought in the War of 1812 against the United States, to ask Sassaba to stand down and build consensus around accommodating U.S. presence. At a second council, the ogimaag (except Sassaba) agreed to sell four square miles along the Saint Marys River to the United States in exchange for financial compensation, hunting and fishing rights, and the possibility of a benevolent relationship with a foreign power.⁴⁴

43. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 55n1; Extract from the Journal of David Bates Douglass, May 26, 1820, *ibid.*, 366 (appendix E); Journal of Charles C. Trowbridge, *ibid.*, 462 (appendix G) (quote). Cass’s party was composed of forty-three people total. This included the “Governor’s suite” of eight (which included Schoolcraft and Douglass), as well as “twelve french voyageurs . . . Eleven Soldiers . . . Nine Indians of the Ottawa and Chippeway nations [*sic*], and Two Interpreters” (*ibid.*, 462, appendix G). David B. Douglass wrote that ten Anishinaabeg accompanied the expedition, but he listed only nine. See also Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 341.

44. For this exchange, see Miller, *Ogimaag*, 68, 87, 125–26; Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 341–44; Janet Elizabeth Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 31–36. I have adopted the spelling of the names of individual Anishinaabeg from Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*. On the long political career of Shingwaukonse, see Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse*.

After achieving their first goal for the Upper Peninsula, Cass's party proceeded to examine the region's copper resources. They traveled along the southern shore of Lake Superior until reaching the mouth of Ontonagon River on the western half of the peninsula. They then traveled upstream and met with Waabishkibines, an Ojibwe guide from the Ontonagon band whose village was located nearest a roughly three-thousand-pound rock of pure (or "native") copper made famous by numerous travelers' accounts. Cass was interested in the boulder itself but also, more importantly, believed they would find evidence of more copper nearby. As Schoolcraft remarked in his chronicle of the trip, "[T]o examine the mineralogy of the adjacent region, was among the primary objects of the present expedition, and . . . the Governor determined to lose no time in exploring it."⁴⁵ Waabishkibines led a small contingent of the larger group to the copper rock, many of whom found it underwhelming. The Ontonagon band, on the other hand, considered Misko-biiwaabik (copper), and the boulder in particular, a powerful, animate object and an important source of sovereignty and spiritual wealth. Consequently, they banished Waabishkibines from their band for several years for having shown the boulder to Cass's party.⁴⁶ Although the copper boulder did not live up to American expectations, Schoolcraft proceeded to examine the "mineral appearances of the surrounding country" and collected as many copper specimens as time permitted.⁴⁷

In his capacity as a man of science working for the settler state, Schoolcraft was encouraged by what he found on the Upper Peninsula, and his published work found broad circulation. After returning to his family in Vernon, New York, Schoolcraft promptly drafted his report for the War Department and publicized his findings in various periodicals and as a popular travel narrative. He began in late September 1820 by writing a letter to the editor of the Albany newspaper, the *New York Statesman*. In it, he proclaimed that "evidences of the existence of copper in the basin of Lake Superior are ample.

45. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 119–20.

46. On Waabishkibines, the Ontonagon band, and copper, see Redix, "Our Hope and Our Protection," 224–49; Peters, "Wa-Bish-Kee-Pe-Nas and the Chippewa Reverence for Copper," 47–60; Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa*, 56–59; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, ed. Theresa M. Schenck, 2nd ed. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009), 60.

47. "It is indeed, notwithstanding the exaggerated accounts, a wonderful mass, and viewed in connexion with the mineral appearances of the surrounding country, leaves little doubt that extensive mines of this metal exist in the vicinity." Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 125–26.

There is every indication of its abundance that the geologist could wish.”⁴⁸ In his official report to Calhoun not long after, he went further, connecting the appearance of abundant copper with the pursuit of national economic independence. “Concerning the variety, importance, and extent of its mineral productions,” he wrote, “little doubt can remain. Every fact which has been noticed, tends to strengthen the belief that there are extensive copper mines upon its shores.” He was confident that additional scientific fieldwork would strengthen this conclusion and “cannot fail both to augment our sources of industry, and to promote our commercial independence.” However, he discouraged the pursuit of mining operations soon, given that the “mineral district of lake Superior . . . lies upwards of three hundred miles beyond the utmost point of our settlements on the northwestern frontier; and in the occupation of Savage tribes whose hostility has been so recently felt.” Under present conditions, Schoolcraft argued, a military presence would be required to protect U.S. settlers who went searching for copper, or any companies that set up mining operations. In other words, Schoolcraft’s report concluded that although copper was abundant, the United States could not mine the land effectively while it remained distant from settler populations and in the power of the Anishinaabeg.⁴⁹

After Cass’s expedition, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft became the government’s chief source of information about the peoples and resources of the Upper Peninsula. In May 1822, the federal government appointed Schoolcraft as Indian Agent at the new military post at Sault Ste. Marie. The attention that Schoolcraft’s publications brought to Anishinaabe copper and his presence on the Upper Peninsula motivated certain members of Congress to pursue the matter further. In the 1820s, the most significant of advocates for the appropriation of Anishinaabe copper—outside Cass and Schoolcraft—was

48. Henry R. Schoolcraft to Nathaniel H. Carter, Oct. 27, 1820, in Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Summary Narrative of an Exploratory Expedition to the Sources of the Mississippi River, in 1820: Resumed and Completed, by the Discovery of Its Origin in Itasca Lake, in 1832* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1855), 410 (appendix no. 1); Richard G. Bremer, *Indian Agent and Wilderness Scholar: The Life of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft* (Mount Pleasant, MI: Clarke Historical Library, 1987), 42–43. For Schoolcraft’s other publications based on the Cass expedition, see Henry R. Schoolcraft, “Account of the Native Copper on the Southern Shore of Lake Superior, with Historical Citations and Miscellaneous Remarks, in a Report to the Department of War,” *American Journal of Science* 3, no. 2 (1821): 201–21; Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States* (Albany: E. & E. Hosford, 1821).

49. Henry R. Schoolcraft to John C. Calhoun, Nov. 6, 1820, in Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal* (ed. Williams), 351 (appendix D).

likely Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton. Benton earned a reputation as a populist in the Senate by championing causes that promoted white equality through empire. The expropriation of Great Lakes copper would similarly serve the interests of a broad base of white settlers—with the bonus of complementing the growing mining industries of Missouri. In May 1822, Benton submitted a motion to have the executive branch communicate to the Senate any information “showing the number, value, & position of the Copper mines on the south shores of Lake Superior; the names of the Indian tribes who claim them; and the practicability of extinguishing their title, and the probable advantage which may result to the republic from their acquisition & working of their mines.”⁵⁰ Implicit in Benton’s resolution was the recognition that Anishinaabe copper could become important to the national economy, but also that mining was predicated on dispossession and that the capacity of the U.S. state to do so remained indeterminate. Thus, whatever additional information that Congress could obtain about the Anishinaabeg and their mineral wealth would help them gauge how to effectively allocate their own limited resources. Accordingly, Benton’s resolution was immediately forwarded to Schoolcraft on the Upper Peninsula.⁵¹

Nearly two decades before Douglass Houghton submitted his famed 1841 report, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft stated plainly to Congress that the Upper Peninsula was abundant with mineable and marketable copper. In his 1822 report answering the Senate’s request for more information, Schoolcraft reiterated his conclusion that “copper is abundantly found on the south shore of Lake Superior.” He went on, “I must be permitted to consider these mines . . . unparalleled in extent, and to recommend them, as such, to the notice of the government.” Besides confirming their richness and quality, Schoolcraft also wrote about how the material could be brought to market. Echoing economic nationalist arguments of the time, he scorned the massive

50. 38 *Annals of Cong.* 454 (1822). On Thomas Hart Benton see Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2020), 41–52; Ken Mueller, *Senator Benton and the People: Master Race Democracy on the Early American Frontiers* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014).

51. Charles Cutts to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, May 8, 1822, box 3, reel 2, frames 37–39, Papers of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter HRS:LC). For Schoolcraft’s career as an Indian Agent, see Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan’s Native Americans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 204; Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 165–77; Bremer, *Indian Agent and Wilderness Scholar*; Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820–1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), chap. 5.

consumption of foreign copper and manufactured goods in the United States as “annually transmitting immense sums to enrich foreign states.” He reminded Congress that these deposits were accessible, noting how the advantages of lake navigation and the anticipated Erie Canal would overcome any difficulties in transporting the metal to eastern harbors. “[T]he conclusions are inevitable,” he wrote. “In every point of view, the distance of these mines from the market presents no solid objection to their being explored, with profit to the nation.”⁵²

Schoolcraft was confident in the profitability of mining the Upper Peninsula, but he also acknowledged that the Anishinaabeg had made his efforts to study their resources difficult. He complained not only about the region’s remoteness, the difficulty of communication, and the unreliability of traders but also, most of all, about the difficulties of acquiring information from Natives. Keeping settler colonists like Schoolcraft ignorant was often a deliberate strategy. As the Ojibwe scholar Gerald Vizenor observed, “The tribes did not mine the mineral as a source of private wealth; the copper was used in sacred rites and ceremonies. White men made it their official business to locate minerals, but tribal people were secretive about the places copper could be found.”⁵³ Schoolcraft similarly described his experience trying to acquire information about copper from the Anishinaabeg as filled with “prevarications, and evasions, which present a continual series of embarrassment to every person who seeks, through their aid, to develop the mineral resources, or describe the natural productions, of their territories.” Where his report to the Senate lacked detail, Schoolcraft blamed Native people and dismissed Native secrecy about copper as based in “prejudices and superstitions” rather than recognizing it as a strategy to keep settlers ignorant and maintain sovereignty.⁵⁴ Schoolcraft encouraged the federal government to extinguish Native title to the mineral-rich regions of the Upper Peninsula and trivialized the meaning of the copper lands to the Anishinaabeg. He framed the termination of Native title in paternalistic and transactional terms, assuming that the Anishinaabeg would happily dispose of the land for goods and annuities to alleviate their supposed impoverished conditions. He also argued that the exchange had the potential to alleviate “those bitter feelings” that the Anishinaabeg had harbored toward the United States since the War of 1812 (allegedly instigated and stoked by the British). Acquiring and developing these mineral resources would encourage greater intercourse with

52. S. Doc. 17-5, at 10 (1822).

53. Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa*, 58.

54. S. Doc. 17-5, at 27 (1822).

U.S. citizens and demonstrate “a true conception of power and justice, and the pacific and benevolent policy of our government.”⁵⁵

For Schoolcraft, the expropriation of Anishinaabe copper was part of the civilizing mission at the core of U.S. Indian policy. This mission understood Native peoples as inferior and in opposition to civilized society and sought the end of the political autonomy of Indigenous nations—and greater access to the wealth of their homelands—through assimilation or expulsion. In parts of the northern Great Lakes region, where there was less pressure to remove Native peoples, the United States attempted to politically subordinate Indigenous populations within their homelands at the same time as they appropriated their wealth. That same year, Schoolcraft wrote to Cass, describing the Anishinaabeg of the southern shore as “A people so incapable of self-government, whose customs, laws, & manners, are so relaxed, and whose spirit is sunk so low” that they “are no longer independent, and should not be so considered, except for the mere purpose of treating for the sale of their lands, and the settlement of annuities.”⁵⁶ In later years, Schoolcraft would follow the lead of Lewis Cass in advocating for Indian removal policy. He would also capitalize on the authority afforded him by his career in federal service to publicize his theories about the racial inferiority of Indigenous peoples. Throughout his career, Schoolcraft’s work reflected the politics of his patron: a consistent belief that the mineral wealth of the Anishinaabeg should not remain in their control.⁵⁷

55. *Ibid.*, 14.

56. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to Lewis Cass, Dec. 2, 1822, Letters Received by the Superintendent, 1819–1835: July–December 1822, Records of the Michigan Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1976–1976 [*sic*; covers years 1814–51] (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1, roll 11, frame 277), Records of the National Archives and Records Administration, 1789–ca. 2007, Record Group 64, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 178333588) at www.archives.gov.

57. On the “civilizing mission” in the Northwest Territory, see Witgen, *Seeing Red*. For northern Indian removal and the settler colonial apologetics of Lewis Cass and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, see Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, chap. 9; Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*; Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, chap. 5; Sean P. Harvey, “Must Not Their Languages Be Savage and Barbarous Like Them?: Philology, Indian Removal, and Race Science,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 30, no. 4 (2010): 518–21; Alicia Puglionesi, *In Whose Ruins: Power, Possession, and the Landscapes of American Empire* (New York: Scribner, 2022), 37–44; Robert H. Keller, “An Economic History of Indian Treaties in the Great Lakes Region,” *American Indian Journal* 4, no. 2 (1978): 17.

TREATIES AND STATEHOOD

The information that Schoolcraft provided to the Senate played a crucial role in shaping the course of congressional debate over whether or not the United States should attempt to extinguish Anishinaabe title to their copper-rich lands. In January 1823, Benton introduced a bill to the Senate “to enable the President of the United States to treaty with the Chippewa Indians for the purchase of certain lands on the south side of Lake Superior, supposed to contain valuable mines of copper.”⁵⁸ That summer, Schoolcraft reported that he had found a “very large and rich” vein of copper ore on the southern shore of Lake Superior, which he thought would “yield as great a per centum of metal, as similar ores . . . at the best European mines.”⁵⁹ Cass communicated Schoolcraft’s findings to the Senate and recommended that U.S. officials negotiate with the Anishinaabeg for the right to search for and mine copper, but not for the “absolute extinction of title.” Far from an aversion to dispossession, which he had already once recommended, Cass’s new recommendation reflected the concession of a U.S. official better informed of the limits of U.S. political control over the upper Great Lakes and of the difficulties of studying its natural resources. Moreover, the extinction of title at this moment, he feared, would result in “embarrassments” to the United States, as traders would no longer be forced to obey the “wholesome restraints of the laws” regulating trade and intercourse with Indigenous people.⁶⁰

In 1825, Benton championed a bill on the Senate floor that resembled Cass’s recommendations. The bill authorized the appointment of commissioners to meet with an assembly of Anishinaabeg and exchange a sum of \$10,000 for “the right of discovering and working certain valuable Copper Mines, supposed to be on the south side of Lake Superior.” Benton defended the bill and, knowing what was at stake for western interests, insisted that the appropriation was “an object of no consideration in the magnitude of the question to be decided.” As the senator from Missouri, he reminded his colleagues of the national advantages of having a domestic supply of the metal in combination with the growing Missouri zinc-mining industry, which would together provide a domestic source for brass. Some senators objected,

58. 40 Annals of Cong. 146 (1823).

59. H. R. Schoolcraft, “Notice of Recently Discovered Copper Mines on Lake Superior, with Several Other Localities of Minerals,” *American Journal of Science* 7, no. 1 (1824): 43–44.

60. “Copper Mine Lands on Lake Superior,” *American State Papers*, 8, *Public Lands*, 4:66. See also Governor Cass to Thomas Hart Benton, Jan. 19, 1823, *Territorial Papers*, 11:332.

not because they thought the land should be left to the Anishinaabeg but because the whole “experiment” was too big of a financial gamble. Further mineralogical research, they argued, should be conducted to ensure the appropriation would be a safe investment. Benton leaned on the credibility of Schoolcraft’s science to alleviate these concerns. He claimed that a more thorough investigation of the land than Schoolcraft had already conducted was impossible because it “would involve the commission of a trespass upon the soil and jurisdiction of the Indians.” If Congress wanted more information than Schoolcraft had provided, they would have to first terminate Anishinaabe title to the land and begin mining. “[W]e know as much as we can learn, by looking at the surface of the ground. If we want to know more, we must penetrate the bowels of the earth, and that is the precise thing which the bill before the Senate proposes to do.” He encouraged his colleagues to take the risk by pointing to the fact that “The great copper mines of England, which now furnish more than one half of the whole quantity of copper produced by all the mines in the known world, were only discovered in the last century.” Thus, Anishinaabe land might similarly transform the United States into a global leader of copper production. Benton’s powerful oral defense secured the bill a third reading, but it ultimately failed. Nevertheless, in the following two decades the cohort pushing expropriation for the copper lands would manage to advance their interests by attaching it to the ongoing process of treaty making throughout the Great Lakes region.⁶¹

In the same year that Benton defended a bill to search and mine for copper on the Upper Peninsula, Lewis Cass attempted to delineate new boundaries for Indigenous nations in the Great Lakes region. This would, in turn, serve to simplify Indigenous politics in the minds of U.S. officials and make the dispossession of Native land easier. At a multitribal peace treaty at Prairie du Chien (present-day southwestern Wisconsin), Cass aimed to persuade Great Lakes Indigenous peoples to agree to concrete territorial borders, claiming their historical ambiguity was the cause of regional conflicts. During the negotiations, Native leaders challenged U.S. conceptions of territoriality, and many remained uncertain about the legitimacy of the newly outlined boundaries. The Anishinaabeg, in particular, refused to speak as a single nation as Cass wanted. They insisted that the U.S. government speak with the Anishinaabeg on the southern shore of Lake Superior. In response, the next year, Cass—assisted by Schoolcraft—held another treaty council at Fond du Lac, on the western end of Lake Superior, where they were joined by Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas L. McKenney and several

61. 1 Reg. Deb. 684–86 (1825); Bremer, *Indian Agent and Wilderness Scholar*, 68–69.

hundred Anishinaabeg. While the treaty's premise was to build consensus around the new boundaries, U.S. agents used this second treaty to attend to other matters. Cass asked the secretary of war to send a military expedition and display "the power and authority of the United States" in a region still "subject to British influence" and filled with Indians of a "hostile attitude."⁶² The treaty itself stipulated that the Anishinaabeg must "fully acknowledge the authority and jurisdiction of the United States, and disclaim all connections with any foreign power."⁶³ Clearly, Cass remained anxious about his inability to sever diplomatic and economic ties between the Anishinaabeg and the British. Moreover, as other historians have noted, the Anishinaabeg held the upper hand in these negotiations, given that they stood to receive goods and cash for an acknowledgment of U.S. power in a place where such authority could be exercised only with great difficulty.⁶⁴

The treaty with the Anishinaabeg of Fond du Lac in 1826 was intended to reinforce the territorial provisions of the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien, but U.S. officials attempted to use it to simultaneously advance their interests in the region's copper. In anticipation of the treaty, Benton wrote to Schoolcraft that the treaty was an opportunity to address the "copper mine business."⁶⁵ Indeed, the treaty contained language that embodied the spirit of the bill that Benton had advocated for in the Senate the previous year. Specifically, it provided the United States with "the right to search for, and carry away, any metal or minerals from any part of their country," but reserved Indigenous title to the land.⁶⁶ During treaty negotiations, Cass had in fact insisted that the copper was of no use to the Anishinaabeg and boldly asked for the right to search for and take the metal so that it could be used by U.S. manufacturers. Jiichiishkiwenh and another (unnamed) ogimaa from the

62. Governor Cass to the Secretary of War, May 19, 1826, *Territorial Papers*, 11:970.

63. "Treaty with the Chippewa, 1826," Aug. 5, 1826, in Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 2:270.

64. On the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien and subsequent 1826 Treaty of Fond du Lac, see Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 347–54; Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 169–73; Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 20–29; Redix, "Our Hope and Our Protection," 229–32; and Bethel Saler, *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 104–10. For the number of Anishinaabeg in attendance at Fond du Lac, see Thomas L. McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jun'r, 1827), 30; Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 354; Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 25.

65. Thomas H. Benton to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Mar. 14, 1826, box 5, reel 3, frame 218, HRS:LC.

66. "Treaty with the Chippewa, 1826," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:269.

Ontonagon band responded by affirming their possession of the copper and its cultural significance and insisting that if the United States decided to take and sell the copper anyway, “the benefit to be derived from its sale, must be extended to our children . . . For ourselves, we care but little. We are old and nearly worn out. But our children must be provided for.”⁶⁷ But Cass and McKenney had no intention of respecting the wishes of the Ontonagon Band ogimaag. Four days before the signing of the 1826 treaty, two boats departed Fond du Lac with directions from Cass and McKenney to steal the Ontonagon Boulder—a scheme ultimately doomed to failure by the rugged landscape.⁶⁸

The federal government continued to prioritize the investigation of Anishinaabe copper during subsequent expeditions to meet with Indigenous leaders on the Upper Peninsula. At the request of the War Department, Schoolcraft led two more expeditions in 1831 and 1832. Each was premised on the need to get Indigenous leaders to recommit to the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien but also aimed to investigate the influence of foreign traders and the natural resources of Native land. Schoolcraft, now the expeditionary head, received the support of additional men of science paid for by the government. Schoolcraft invited the young Douglass Houghton to accompany the expedition as geologist and physician. Houghton was educated in medicine and the sciences in New York and had just begun work as an itinerant lecturer in Detroit when Schoolcraft offered him the position. As part of these expeditions, Houghton investigated the mineral resources of the southern shore twice in 1831 and again in 1832. In his reports to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, which were then transmitted to Congress, Houghton argued that rich deposits of copper ore would likely be found only around the western and northernmost parts of the Upper Peninsula. This fact would play an important role in the future of treaty making in the region.⁶⁹

67. “Copy of the Journal of Proceedings under the Treaty of Fond du lac, as Noted by the Secretary,” in McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes*, 463–64 (appendix). See also Redix, “Our Hope and Our Protection,” 230–31.

68. On the scheme to steal the boulder, see McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes*, 254–55, 361, 477–78; Vizenor, *The People Named the Chippewa*, 59.

69. Krause, *The Making of a Mining District*, 97–103. During the 1832 expedition, Houghton was accompanied by Lieutenant James Allen. For Houghton’s reports, see Douglass Houghton to Lewis Cass, Nov. 14, 1831, in Philip P. Mason, ed., *Schoolcraft’s Expedition to Lake Itasca: The Discovery of the Source of the Mississippi* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1993), 293 (appendix D); “Report of Lieutenant Allen, of the Army, of H. B. Schoolcraft’s Exploration of the Country at and Beyond the Sources of the Mississippi, on a Visit to the Northwestern Indians in 1832,” *American State Papers*, 5, *Military Affairs*, 5:321. On motivations for the 1831 and 1832

At the same time as the federal government was sponsoring expeditions to study the resources of the Upper Peninsula, white migration, land speculation, and dispossession were accelerating on the Lower Peninsula. By 1835, the settler population had grown sufficiently to meet the requirement set by the 1787 Northwest Ordinance and permit Michigan Territory to enter the union as a state. But achieving full statehood depended on the timely resolution of a land dispute between Michigan and the state of Ohio over possession of the valuable port of Toledo in southwestern Lake Erie. Although not yet recognized as a state by the federal government, Michigan voters nevertheless elected a state legislature, which in turn selected John Norvell and Lucian Lyon to be the state's first U.S. senators. In their quest for statehood, Lyon championed a compromise: conceding the port in exchange for the incorporation of the western half of the Upper Peninsula into the borders of the new state of Michigan. "My opinion," he wrote on February 21, 1836, "is that within twenty years the addition here proposed will be valued by Michigan at more than forty millions of dollars, and that even after ten years the State would not think of selling it for that sum." In another letter the same day, he suggested that "the copper mines supposed to exist there may hereafter be worth to us millions of dollars." Lyon's enthusiasm for the copper lands of the Upper Peninsula was no accident. He and Cass were friends, and Cass likely encouraged this position.⁷⁰ The Judiciary Committee of the Senate also invited Schoolcraft to weigh in on this issue. "[T]here is no doubt in my mind," he said, "that the large area of territory in the upper country, offered as an equivalent for the disputed boundary with Ohio, will be found of far greater value and importance to the State than the 'seven miles strip' surrendered."⁷¹ Schoolcraft urged Michigan's second senator, John Norvell, to accept the proposed compromise. Once again, leading government officials had incorporated the mineral resources of the Anishinaabeg into

expeditions, see letters in Mason, *Schoolcraft's Expedition*, appendix A. See also Saler, *The Settlers' Empire*, 108–9. On the term *men of science* in the nineteenth-century United States, see Paul Lucier, "The Professional and the Scientist in Nineteenth-Century America," *Isis* 100, no. 4 (2009): 699–732.

70. Lucius Lyon to Col. Andrew Mack and Lucius Lyon to Charles C. Hascall, Feb. 21, 1836, in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, vol. 27 (Lansing, MI: Robert Smith Printing Co., State Printers and Binders, 1897), 479 (quotes); L. G. Stuart, "Verdict for Michigan, How the Upper Peninsula Became a Part of Michigan," *ibid.*, 402–3.

71. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes of the American Frontiers: Notices of Passing Events, Facts, and Opinions, A.D. 1812 to A.D. 1842* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1851), 547.

their own visions for the future prosperity of an industrializing settler empire.⁷²

The debate over Michigan's boundaries shows that government officials had a firm grasp on the economic significance of Anishinaabe-controlled mineral resources well before Houghton submitted his 1841 copper report. But the realization of the capitalist and settler colonial fantasy to use this land to transform the United States into a global producer of copper goods remained contingent on access to Native land. Like the Northwest Territory, the newly drawn borders of the state of Michigan did not reflect existing power dynamics on the ground, especially in the upper Great Lakes. Gouverneur Kemble, congressman from New York and owner of a successful weapons foundry at West Point, understood this dilemma when he proposed that the United States stop paying foreign nations for their copper and develop the "dormant wealth" of the continent. But there was a problem, because "as long as this country remains in possession of the Indian tribes," he noted, "these copper minerals can neither be sold, nor opened generally to the enterprize of our citizens."⁷³ The incorporation of Anishinaabe land and resources into the new state of Michigan was merely nominal. The extraction of industrial raw materials for U.S. industries could not commence where Indigenous sovereignty persisted.

Alternatives to dispossessing the copper lands were dismissed by U.S. officials. Writing to the secretary of war in March 1841, Kemble proposed an arrangement that did not require the Anishinaabeg to sell their land. Instead, Kemble suggested employing the Anishinaabeg as miners and compensating them for their labor and for the use of their land with some portion of the ore or the proceeds of its sale. This would remove for the U.S. government the expense and risks involved in negotiating a treaty. Kemble

72. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 186–87; Susan E. Gray, "Writing Michigan History from a Transborder Perspective," *Michigan Historical Review* 34, no. 1 (2008): 11, 19–20; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775–1850*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 338–40; Onuf, *Statehood and Union*, 88–108; Roger L. Rosentreter, "Michigan's Quest for Statehood," in Richard J. Hathaway, ed., *Michigan: Visions of Our Past* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1989), 79–95.

73. Gouverneur Kemble to Joel Robert Poinsett, Mar. 3, 1841, Michigan Superintendency, 1824–1851: 1840–1841, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–1881, Letters Received, 1824–1880, National Archives Microfilm Publication (hereafter NAM) M234, roll 424, frame 720, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793–1999, Record Group 75, National Archives Building, Washington, DC, available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164040619) at www.archives.gov.

also assumed that “white labor would be difficult to procure in a region as distant from the inhabited parts of the country.” But the proposal was not entirely novel either. Kemble did not consider that copper might have cultural significance to Anishinaabe people on the Upper Peninsula. He also assumed that Anishinaabe participation in extractive industries would help with curbing the influence of British Canada and advancing the U.S. civilizing mission by moving Indigenous peoples “beyond the mere wants of the savage.”⁷⁴ Thomas Hartley Crawford, commissioner of Indian affairs, advised against Kemble’s proposal precisely because it maintained Indigenous ownership over the land. He argued that such an arrangement was impossible under the U.S. Constitution given that it was essentially “a species of lease” with a private citizen to develop property that did not yet belong to the United States.⁷⁵ Only after Congress purchased the land could its resources be developed. In other words, the mining of mineral-rich Indigenous land was predicated on its dispossession. A year later, the commissioner of the 1842 treaty, Robert Stuart, assumed that the Anishinaabeg would eventually be expelled from the mineral-rich lands and that white laborers would work the mines. Indeed, the dominant sources of labor in the early decades of the copper-mining industry were white men previously employed in extractive industries in the United States and Europe.⁷⁶

74. Ibid.

75. Thomas Hartley Crawford to John Bell, Apr. 17, 1841, Michigan Superintendency, 1824–1851: 1840–1841, NAM, roll 424, frame 724, available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164040619) at www.archives.gov. See also Keller, “An Economic History,” 17.

76. Robert Stuart to John C. Spencer, July 27, 1842, Michigan Superintendency, 1824–1851: 1842–1845, NAM, roll 425, frame 425, available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164041602) at www.archives.gov. On the makeup of labor in the early mining of Upper Peninsula copper see Gates, *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars*, 94–96; Lankton, *Hollowed Ground*, 4; Hyde, *Copper for America*, 45; and Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism*, 42. The labor of Ojibwe women provided important sustenance and clothing for these early mineworkers; see Child, *Holding Our World Together*, 101. Patrick Wolfe argued that “Settler colonialism brings its own labor”—that is, one premise of settler colonialism is that it is based on the exploitation of Indigenous land rather than on the extraction of surplus value from Indigenous labor; see “Settler Colonialism Then and Now: A Conversation between J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe,” *Politica & Società* (June 2012): 235–58, reprinted in J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Speaking of Indigenous Politics: Conversations with Activists, Scholars, and Tribal Leaders* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 352 (quote). On the limitations of the land-labor binary in settler colonial studies, see Stephanie E. Smallwood, “Reflections on Settler Colonialism, the Hemispheric Americas, and Chattel Slavery,” *WMQ* 76, no. 3 (2019): 407–16; Robin D. G. Kelley, “The Rest of

The Anishinaabeg of the Upper Peninsula maintained political control over their copper lands in the years immediately preceding the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. This was evident to Douglass Houghton while leading his geological expedition through their territory in 1840 on behalf of the state of Michigan. When Houghton's party approached the Ontonagon River, intent on visiting the famed Ontonagon Boulder, they stopped short. According to the journal of Bela Hubbard, Houghton's assistant and business associate, they saw Native lodges on the opposite side. The Anishinaabe people there gave Houghton's party a friendly greeting, shaking hands and offering them tobacco and bread. When Houghton ignored their request not to proceed further into their land, Hubbard recorded that seven Anishinaabeg in a canoe, led by the son of Gichi-Bizhiki (Great Buffalo), an important ogimaa of La Pointe, approached them two or three miles up the river. "This country belongs to us," he said, and asked about the purpose of Houghton's trip. They had been stationed at the mouth of the river to prevent boats from passing through or people from taking copper without Gichi-Bizhiki's permission. They indicated that they would not allow Houghton to proceed any further unless they were offered a present of foodstuffs now and another on the way back. Houghton relented after nearly an hour of arguing with them and directed his team to give them pork, flour, and tobacco. The son of Gichi-Bizhiki insisted that an additional present of powder and lead or other provisions be sent to La Pointe, to which Houghton agreed. Hubbard resented this exchange but understood that they had no choice: even those they hired to help navigate the landscape were "allied to indian blood." But this was not an isolated event. That same year, a group of Lac Vieux Desert Anishinaabeg protested the trespass of a government party surveying the Michigan-Wisconsin boundary and extracted a tax for their passage. Like Schoolcraft before him, Houghton's efforts to explore and assess the industrial resources at the edge of Lake Superior forced him to confront the persistent reality of Indigenous sovereignty.⁷⁷

Us: Rethinking Settler and Native," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017): 267–76; Shannon Speed, "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2017): 783–90.

77. Bela Hubbard, *Lake Superior Journal: Bela Hubbard's Account of the 1840 Houghton Expedition*, ed. Bernard C. Peters (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1983), 64–65 (quotes), 99n88; Doherty, "Old-Time Origins," 172. A few years later, across the U.S.-Canadian border, at Kitigaun Seebee, or Garden River, near Sault Ste. Marie, the Anishinaabe leader Shingwaukonse attempted to secure Native claims to proprietorship over mineral lands and defended against the trespass of mineral surveyors; see Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse*, 108–24.

DEBT AND DISPOSSESSION

The United States depended on the fur trade to project power and navigate the social and natural environments of the Great Lakes region. Although fur-trading companies had long been a source of employment and exchange, it was not until the 1830s that a single company—the AFC—wielded enough commercial power to facilitate U.S. settler colonial aspirations. Before the War of 1812, Great Lakes fur capitalists had tried and failed to abandon the kinship mode of production characteristic of the industry. Efforts to consolidate business and rationalize exchange—that is, to turn relatives into customers, gifts into loans, and producers into debt peons—were limited by the power and knowledge of Indigenous peoples to dictate terms of exchange and drive hard bargains, the dependency of empires on political alliances with Indigenous nations, competition among trading companies, and a general inability to enforce debt claims.⁷⁸ This gradually changed after the end of the War of 1812. The AFC's rise to power was precipitated by the British abandonment of their Indigenous allies and the United States' campaign to restrict all foreign trade with new legislation and military forts. With federal cooperation, the AFC pursued aggressive business strategies throughout the 1820s and 1830s of reducing competition through buyouts and mergers, manipulating international markets, and controlling costs by instituting austere money-saving measures at every level. Many Anishinaabe communities were able to adapt to the new measures imposed on them by turning increasingly to fishing and farming. When the AFC began commercial fishing in Lake Superior, the Anishinaabeg of the southern shore managed to protect their natural resources by refusing to reveal the best fishing locations to the fishermen hired by the company.⁷⁹

78. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 479–85; McDonnell, *Masters of Empire*, 254–57, 262, 266, 268–69, 316–17. See also Sleeper-Smith, “Cultures of Exchange in a North-Atlantic World.” White agreed with the earlier conclusions of Erik Wolf that the fur trade eventually transformed a kinship mode of production into one “which reduces the producers to a kind debt peonage.” He disagreed, however, about the timing and was primarily concerned with showing that this change had not occurred before 1815; see White, *The Middle Ground*, 483; Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (1982; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 194. On the persistence of exaggerated claims of Anishinaabe dependency, see Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 17–20.

79. Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, chap. 8; McDonnell, *Masters of Empire*, 323; David Andrew Nichols, *Peoples of the Inland Sea: Native Americans and Newcomers in the Great Lakes Region, 1600–1870* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018), 182; Doherty, “Old-Time Origins,” 169.

But just as Anishinaabe communities were adapting to these transforming social relations, the profits of the Great Lakes fur trade started eroding. This was in part the result of diminishing fur-bearing species, the reduction of Native land, and competition from industrial textile manufacturing. In June 1834, anticipating a continued depression of the fur trade markets, Astor sold the AFC's Northern Department encompassing the Great Lakes region to one of his most trusted associates, Ramsay Crooks. Around this time, it became a fixed policy of the War Department to include the payment of the accumulating debts that Natives owed to traders in the terms of treaties. By including them, fur traders—whose relationships with Native women and communities had long been central to the success of the industry—were transformed into a means to acquire Native land. The United States was, in short, subsidizing the declining industry through the profits of dispossession. As the historian David Nichols argued, “The American Fur Company’s credit, manpower, and resources helped the U.S. government do something its own factories had never accomplished: persuading Great Lakes Indians to exchange debts for land.”⁸⁰ By the late 1830s, traders were securing around \$200,000 annually from treaties, with a total of over \$2 million by 1842. The bulk of these payments went to traders in the Great Lakes region in the years immediately following the Panic of 1837. Sparked by a rapid credit contraction from the Bank of England, the resulting economic collapse lasted well into the 1840s. During this depression, treaties became the chief vehicle by which the AFC avoided bankruptcy—but the company ultimately failed in 1842. As debt claims increased, traders came to depend on government buyouts and pressured Native leaders to accept the terms of sale provided by the United States. The AFC, in turn, regularly lobbied Washington to recognize its claims and worked to secure commissioners and interpreters friendly to their interests.⁸¹

The AFC collapsed in the same year that the United States attempted to extinguish Anishinaabe title to their copper-rich lands on the Upper Peninsula. At the height of the AFC's financial dependency on treaty making, Congress selected Robert Stuart, the former head of the AFC's Northern Department at Mackinac under Astor, to serve as the commissioner for the

80. D. A. Nichols, *Engines of Diplomacy*, 170–71 (quote at 171); Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 180–81, 210; Witgen, “Seeing Red,” 596–97; Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, 235–37; Eric Jay Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 280–84.

81. James L. Clayton, “The Impact of Traders’ Claims on the American Fur Trade,” in David M. Ellis, ed., *The Frontier in American Development: Essays in Honor of Paul Wallace Gates* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 302–5, 312–14.

1842 Treaty of La Pointe. The treaty took place in late September and included between three and four thousand Anishinaabeg, including many whose doodem did not possess the territory in question, who were grouped together according to political categories expedient to the United States. Two months before the treaty, Stuart suggested significantly expanding the geographical dimensions of the land cession after learning from Douglass Houghton that copper ore might extend beyond the western limits of Michigan. Extending the cession, Stuart argued, guaranteed that the government would “secure the whole mineral district, and obviate the necessity of holding any more treaties in that region.” Stuart took for granted that the Anishinaabeg would eventually be removed and white laborers brought in. This would occur first from “such portions of the mineral lands, as may be worked by the whites,” and later when “the land shall be required for settlement . . . unless the policy of the gov’t should require it.”⁸² In early August, Crawford confirmed Stuart’s instructions to acquire 7 million acres for less than \$30,000, plus the payment of Native debts, and to include a stipulation in the treaty terms that the president could order their removal at an unspecified date.⁸³

Speaking to the assembled Anishinaabeg at La Pointe, Stuart claimed the U.S. government wanted to purchase their land not for settlement but for “the removal of the minerals which are said to be on them.” Misrepresenting the meaning of the 1826 Treaty of Fond du Lac, Stuart argued they could only gain from selling their land, since they had already given permission to have the minerals removed, “which shall be done, whether you sell your lands or not.”⁸⁴ The Ojibwe ogimaag were critical of Stuart, including those whose doodem possessed the land in question, such as Gichi-Bizhiki, the elderly and influential ogimaa of La Pointe, and the Lac du Flambeau ogimaa, Waabishki-gaagaagi (White Crow). Weeks after the treaty council, Gichi-Bizhiki wrote that “the commissioner would not listen to us at all.” In early

82. Robert Stuart to John C. Spencer, July 27, 1842, Michigan Superintendency, 1824–1851: 1842–1845, NAM, roll 425, frame 425, available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164041602) at www.archives.gov. See also Keller, “An Economic History,” 17. In the month before the treaty, the Secretary of Indian Affairs Thomas Hartley Crawford wrote to Stuart, “There are valuable minerals on the land that the Chippewas are possessed of, (and they are the only Indians that hold any land in Michigan), which extend westward, however, of that state.” Crawford to Stuart, Aug. 1, 1842, quoted in Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 304.

83. Cleland, “Preliminary Report,” 36–38; Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 39–40.

84. “Sketch of Speech to the Indians at La Pointe by Robert Stuart, Comf. September 29, 1842,” in Satz, “Chippewa Treaty Rights,” appendix 3C, 166–67.

1843, Gichi-Bizhiki said that “[Stuart] spoke of the copper that is strewn along the shore of this lake. He told us that we had given it away . . . I could hardly utter a word before he stopped my mouth.” He also regretted taking the advice of traders: “Perhaps if my traders had kept more aloof, & had kept their advice to themselves, I could have done more for myself in my own ignorance.” Waabishki-gaagaagi denied that there had been any cession of land at the 1842 treaty negotiation and argued that his people had offered only to lease mineral rights. “I did not want to sell any more of my land,” he said in December, after the treaty, “but I was told that it made no difference whether I did or not, if the majority of chiefs signed the treaty our grandfather would take the land.” The Anishinaabeg who signed the treaty did so only after Stuart assured them that they could remain on ceded lands and would not be removed anytime soon. Depending on the reporting, Stuart promised at least another fifty years or perhaps never if they remained peaceful.⁸⁵

Many Anishinaabe communities remained anxious about the possibility of removal and claimed that they were unjustly treated at the negotiation and poorly compensated for the cession of 12 million acres of their land. In January 1843, La Pointe Indian subagent Alfred Brunson, who was present at the treaty council, communicated these concerns to the War Department and requested an amendment to the treaty to provide them with just compensation and to establish a permanent reservation where they could remain. Brunson described the signing of the treaty as coercion: “[T]he uniform testimony of those who witnessed the whole transaction goes to show that the Indians *did not act free & voluntary*, but felt themselves pressed into the measure by a combination of circumstances which they could not contrroll [*sic*].”⁸⁶ Brunson emphasized that the traders present at the treaty were themselves under severe pressure on account of the depressed fur trade to abandon

85. Buffalo (Bizhiki) to Lyman M. Warren, Oct. 28, 1842; Speech by Buffalo (Bizhiki) at La Pointe Council, Jan. 5, 1843; and Speech by White Crow (Waabishki-gaagaagi), Dec. 18, 1842, all enclosed in Alfred Brunson to John C. Spencer, Jan. 8, 1843, La Pointe Agency, 1831–1880: 1840–1843, NAM, roll 388, frame 573, 575 (quotes), available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164009764) at www.archives.gov. For Waabishki-gaagaagi’s denial of the land cession, see John D. Nichols, ed., *“Statement Made by the Indians”: A Bilingual Petition of the Chippewas of Lake Superior, 1864* (London, Canada: University of Western Ontario, 1988), 55. On the 1842 treaty and the response of Alfred Brunson and the Ojibwe ogimaag, see Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 39–44; Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 300–325; Satz, “Chippewa Treaty Rights,” 33–44; Cleland, “Preliminary Report,” 36–41; Keller, “An Economic History.”

86. Alfred Brunson to James D. Doty, July 19, 1843, La Pointe Agency, 1831–1880: 1840–1843, NAM, roll 388, frame 581, available through the Archival Research

the interests “of their brethren as mixed blood, to save that of their employers in the shape of debts, and used their influence . . . to induce them to sign the treaty.” He further accused Stuart of scheming to profit off the exchange and of grossly undervaluing the land relative to the enormous profits to be derived from its natural resources. Ignoring these grievances, he argued, could have grave political and financial consequences. It would further alienate the Anishinaabeg and drive them to British Canada, where they would again become formidable enemies to the United States. Invoking the experience of the Seminole War in the South, Brunson reasoned that provoking a war in the upper Great Lakes would be much more expensive than purchasing the land fairly and peaceably on Native terms.⁸⁷

Stuart felt differently. He dismissed Brunson’s letter, calling the complaints “absurd” and “hollow-lamentations” and insisting that the Ojibwe signed the treaty “not by the influence . . . of traders, but of their own free will.” He called Brunson credulous and ignorant of the country and doubted whether amending the treaty was the best way to maintain Indigenous loyalty. “Is it not evident,” Stuart countered, “that the safer mode is to keep them as stipendiaries, relying from year to year on the bounty of the government?” Similarly, he argued that an Indian war could be easily prevented “by withholding the annuities even for one year, and forbidding them traders,” given that they could not survive “on the spontaneous fruits of the earth.”⁸⁸ He encouraged Brunson to stand firm against the Anishinaabeg—and particularly against Gichi-Bizhiki. But Stuart had critics in Congress too. Writing to Ramsey Crooks in January 1843, Woodbridge, by then a Michigan senator, indicated that the treaty was in danger of dying in the Senate and urged more support. The practice of paying Indian debts out of government tribal funds had become controversial, and the treaty terms seemed too favorable to the AFC, especially considering Stuart’s former life as the chief manager for the AFC’s northern division. The objections were well grounded:

Catalog (ARC identifier 164009764) at www.archives.gov (emphasis in the original).

87. Alfred Brunson to John C. Spencer, Jan. 8, 1843, *ibid.*, roll 388, frame 570. On the strategy of threatening to move to British Canada, see McClurken, “Ottawa Adaptive Strategies,” 45; D. A. Nichols, *Peoples of the Inland Sea*, 182. On some of the channels of information by which Anishinaabe leaders learned about U.S. removal efforts, see Doherty, “Old-Time Origins,” 171–73.

88. Robert Stuart to J. Hartley Crawford, Mar. 15, 1843, La Pointe Agency, 1831–1880: 1840–1843, NAM, roll 424, frame 697 (“absurd”; “free will”), 702 (“hollow-lamentations”), available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 164009764) at www.archives.gov.

the treaty set aside \$75,000 for the satisfaction of Native debts, most of which went to the treaty secretary, treaty witnesses, and John Jacob Astor. Only after months of lobbying did the Senate ratify the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. At that time, they also passed a resolution banning the practice of exchanging traders' debts for land—although, by then, most debt claims had already been submitted and a large percentage of the Indigenous homelands in the Great Lakes region had been dispossessed.⁸⁹

The union of settler colonialism with industrial capitalism meant that even as extractive operations commenced, removal remained a persistent threat to Indigenous peoples. Following ratification of the treaty, the U.S. government immediately opened a mineral land office on the Upper Peninsula. White settler populations rose with the influx of speculators, prospectors, and miners from the east, and the next few years saw more geologists in the region, hired by mining companies or sponsored by state and federal governments.⁹⁰ When the Senate inquired whether the Anishinaabeg had been removed from the mineral district, as stipulated in the 1842 treaty, they were directed to a report by Crawford stating that “the presence of the Chippewas will not interfere, for some time to come, with the mining operations of our citizens . . . When it is found to do so, we can act.”⁹¹ Contrary to Stuart's and Crawford's assurances, the threat of removal appeared within a decade. Minnesota officials Alexander Ramsey and John Watrous convinced President Zachary Taylor to violate Anishinaabe treaty rights and issue an executive order in 1850 to remove the Anishinaabe people living in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula to Sandy Lake in northern Minnesota. To force this relocation, U.S. leaders told them that the 1850 annuities payment would be issued at Sandy Lake, instead of its usual location. They then intentionally delayed its disbursement in order to trap them there for the winter, causing the deaths of hundreds of Anishinaabe people from starvation, sickness, exposure, and the challenges of making the hard journey back to their homes in Anishinaabewaki.⁹²

89. “Treaty with the Chippewa, 1842,” Oct. 4, 1842, in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:543, 545; William Woodbridge to Ramsay Crooks, Jan. 5, 1843, in Grace Lee Nute, ed., *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1844*, vol. 3: Calendar of the American Fur Company's Papers, part 2: 1842–1849 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), 1,291; Clayton, “The Impact of Traders' Claims,” 305–7, 317–18; Satz, “Chippewa Treaty Rights,” 41.

90. Hyde, *Copper for America*, 32–40; Robert James Hybels, “The Lake Superior Copper Fever, 1841–47,” *Michigan History* 34, no. 4 (1950): 309–26.

91. S. Doc. No. 29-403, at 3 (1846). See also Cleland, “Preliminary Report,” 52.

92. On the Sandy Lake tragedy and the response of the Lake Superior ogimaag, see Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 319–21; Redix, *The Murder of Joe White*, 51–60; Redix,

In the wake of this tragedy, the Anishinaabeg on the northern peninsula lodged formal charges against U.S. officials, accusing them of crimes and corruption. They also organized support for a petition opposing removal, and sent a delegation to Washington, led by the elderly La Pointe ogimaa Gichi-Bizhiki and the young St. Croix ogimaa Oshoge. Anishinaabe resistance to removal upended Stuart's prediction that they could be easily controlled through a dependency on U.S. annuities. In reality, the survival of the masses of white newcomers hinged on Anishinaabe communities selling them their surplus vegetables, wild rice, berries, maple sugar, and clothing. The settlers' dependence on Indigenous goods would prove an important asset in the ultimately successful struggle to secure permanent reservations in Anishinaabewaki at the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe. Despite this success, the unjust exchange of land and resources was not lost on the Anishinaabeg. At an annuities payment the next year—the same year that settler colonists removed nearly three thousand tons of copper ore from the southern shore—an Anishinaabe person remarked, “For ten years [white men] have asked from us nothing but land, and ever more land. We give unwillingly the land in which the graves of our fathers rest. But for all that we have given land in our generosity. We knew not that we were giving so much for so little. We did not know that such great treasures of copper were hidden in our land. The white men have grown rich by the bargain.”⁹³

CONCLUSION

Douglass Houghton's geological report was not the catalyst for the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. Nor did it lead settler colonists to become successful copper miners on the Upper Peninsula. Houghton died sailing through a snowstorm on Lake Superior in October 1845. The next year saw the first indications of productive copper mining. Houghton was beloved by Michigan settlers, and his grieving community was quick to attribute any extractive success to him. The image of Houghton as a visionary scientist who had discovered the abundant ore that enabled the success of the Michigan copper industry has been repeated and reinforced ever since. But Houghton's only

“Our Hope and Our Protection,” 237–38; Witgen, *Seeing Red*, 327–37; Child, *Holding Our World Together*, 65–77; White, “Regional Context,” 187–98, 244–55, 275–81; Satz, “Chippewa Treaty Rights,” 51–59; Clifton, “Wisconsin Death March.”

93. German travel writer Johann Georg Kohl documented this statement by an unnamed Lake Superior Ojibwe at La Pointe in 1855. J. G. Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life among the Lake Superior Ojibway*, trans. Lascelles Wrasall (1860; repr., St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 54. For 3,000 tons, see Rickard, *A History of American Mining*, 231.

report before the treaty dealing with the copper-rich land in detail was cautious, not revelatory. Shortly before submitting it in 1841, Houghton warned Governor Woodbridge that the copper lands still needed to be “properly examined” to prevent “many of the wild and hazardous explorations for minerals.” The timing of the 1842 treaty virtually ensured that Houghton’s fears were realized. A lack of geological knowledge about the specific location of copper veins meant that the early years of the copper-mining industry in Michigan were marred by tremendous failure and financial loss. Rather than a harbinger of successful U.S. industrialization, the early days of the copper rush were largely a social and economic disaster—except for a few white men who benefited.⁹⁴

Scholarship that has focused on the role of discovery in the development of U.S. industrial mining has tended to minimize or obscure the settler colonial origins of those industries. A settler state may be able to acquire knowledge about the wealth of Indigenous nations without having the power to undermine Indigenous sovereignty. But the work of government geologists like Schoolcraft and Houghton does provide insight into the early union of settler colonial ambitions and industrial political economy in North America—or the rise of what the Anishinaabe scholar Kyle Powys Whyte called “settler industrial states.”⁹⁵ The three decades after the War of 1812 saw the coming together of the U.S. civilizing mission for the Northwest Territory and an emerging political economy of national self-sufficiency that targeted continental supplies of materials typically imported from overseas. Employing geologists to study the industrial resources of Indigenous nations became an increasingly integral part of the work of treaty making. In this context, the copper of the Anishinaabeg of the Upper Peninsula, long known to settlers, became a focal point for U.S. officials interested in both industrial supremacy and perfect settler sovereignty near a contentious political border with British

94. “1841 Annual Report of the State Geologist,” in George N. Fuller, ed., *Geological Reports of Douglass Houghton: First State Geologist of Michigan, 1837–1845* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1928), 557 (quote); Krause, *The Making of a Mining District*, 152–56, 176–78; Gates, *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars*, 8; Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism*, 40–41.

95. Whyte described “settler industrial states,” like the United States, as polities that serve to “protect and incubate” the process of inscribing settler homelands from Indigenous homelands with industrial means (e.g., large-scale extractive operations). Kyle Powys Whyte, “Indigenous Food Systems, Environmental Justice, and Settler-Industrial States,” in M. Rawlinson and C. Ward, eds., *Global Food, Global Justice: Essays on Eating under Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 143–56.

Canada.⁹⁶ However, the authority of the U.S. state remained weak where they had little control over commerce and could not depend on the pressures of encroaching settler populations. Despite a steady stream of information from U.S. men of science doing fieldwork within Native territories, expropriation remained neither inevitable nor easy. For decades, U.S. leaders struggled to exercise sovereignty in lands that they knew to be abundant and that they claimed as their own. Only by expanding an existing market—the fur trade—through the granting and enforcing of a monopoly were U.S. leaders able to make any inroads toward their long-standing goal of dispossessing the Anishinaabeg and obtaining the raw materials of industrial capitalism.

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96. On perfect settler sovereignty, see Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 25. For more on federal geologists, U.S. empire, and industrial capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Megan Black, *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).