

# HISTORY

OF THE

## OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS

OF MICHIGAN;

A GRAMMAR OF THEIR LANGUAGE,

AND PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY OF THE AUTHOR,

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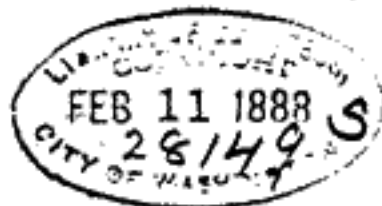
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## CHAPTER IX.

Some of the Legends of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Respecting the Great Flood of the World—A Person Swallowed Up Alive Like a Prophet Jonah.

Before proceeding with the history of the Ottawas and Chippewas some of their most important and peculiar legends will be given. They have a tradition of a great flood, as is recorded in the Bible History, and many other tribes of Indians who speak dialect of the Ottawa and Chippewa languages have the same story. The legends say it was caused, not by a rain, but by the great Ne-naw-bo-zhoo, who was the most remarkable, wonderful, and supernatural being that ever trod upon the earth. He could transfigure himself into the shape of all animals and live with them for a great length of time. He has done much mischief and also many benefits to the inhabitants of the earth whom he called "his nephews;" and he shaped almost everything, teaching his nephews what materials they should take for their future utensils. This mischievous Ne-naw-bo-zhoo spoiled the sugar trees by diluting their sap with water. The legends say, that once upon a time the sugar trees did produce sap at certain season of the year which was almost like a pure syrup; but when this mischievous Ne-naw-bo-zhoo had tasted it, he said to himself, "Ah, that is too cheap. It will not do. My nephews will obtain this sugar too easily in the future time and the sugar will be worthless." And therefore he diluted the sap until he could not taste any sweetness therein. Then he said, "Now my nephews will have to labor hard to make the sugar out of this sap, and the sugar will be much more valuable to them in the future time." In former times the heart of every tree contained fat from which all inhabitants of the earth obtained delicious oil to eat; but this mischievous Ne-naw-bo-zhoo, in his supernatural way, pushed

his staff into the heart of every tree; and this is the reason why the heart of every tree has a different color.

There was no great ark in which to float during the great flood, but when Ne-naw-bo-zhoo could not find any more dry land to run to when he was pursued with mountains of water, he said, "let there be a great canoe." So there was a great canoe which he entered with his animals and floated.

As to the origin of Ne-naw-bo-zhee, the legend says, that once upon a time there lived a maiden with her grandmother, who was a very dutiful and obedient child, observing every precept which was taught her by her grandmother, and she spent much time fasting; during which time she had wonderful dreams which she related to her grandmother every morning during her fast days. She very often had a vision of holding conversation with some deities and finally she was assured in a vision, that her children would be terrible and would redeem all the inhabitants of the earth from their various calamities; and accordingly, she bore two sons. The first born was like any other human child, but the last one was a monster which caused the death of its mother, and, although shaped like a human being, as soon as born ran off in the wilderness and was never again seen by any person; but the first child was nourished and reared by the grandmother. When this child grew to be playful and talkative by the side of its grandmother, he was so strange that very often she would say to him, "Your actions are like a Ne-naw-bo-zhoo." Then the child would reply, "I am the great Ne-naw-bo-zhoo on this earth." The meaning of this word in the Algonquin language is "a clown" and therefore he meant that he was the great "clown" of the world.

When Ne-naw-bo-zhoo became a man he was a great prophet for his nephews and an expert hunter. His hunting dog was a great black wolf. When he learned from his grandmother, that his mother was dead and that his brother was a monster with a body like flint stone which caused her death, Ne-naw-bo-zhoo

was in a great rage after hearing the story and he determined to seek for this evil being and slay him. Then he immediately prepared for a long journey, and trimmed his ponderous war club nicely and prepared to be in a great battle. So off he went with his great black wolf on the war path. As he passed through the forest, for a trial of his strength and the strength of his war club, he simply made motions with it toward one of the tallest pines of the forest and the gigantic tree came down all into slivers. "Ah," said Ne-naw-bo-zhoo, "who could stand against my strength and the strength of my war club." After many days journey going into every nook and loop hole of the earth, he succeeded at last in having a glimpse of the object of his search. Ne-naw-bo-zhoo ran to overtake him, and chased him all over the world; and every now and then he would be close enough to reach him with his war-club and to strike at him, but he would only break a piece of the monster's stony body, which was like a mountain of hard flint-stone. So the legend says that whenever we find a pile of hard flints lying on the face of the earth, there is where Ne-naw-bo-zhoo overtook his brother monster and struck him with his tremendous war-club. At last he vanquished him on the east shore of Grand Traverse Bay, Michigan, near the place now called Antrim City, but formerly by the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, it was called "Pe-wa-na-go-ing," meaning "Flinty Point," so called because there were great rocks of flint lying near the edge of the lake shore. And so the Ottawas and Chippewas say it is there where the old carcass of the monster is now lying—the brother of the great Ne-naw-bo-zhoo. After that he traveled over almost every part of this continent sometimes in the shape of an animal and then again in human shape. There is an impression of human foot tracks on a very smooth rock some where along the Ottawa river in Canada, and also a round hole about as large and deep as a common brass kettle on this flat rock near where the track is and every Ottawa and Chippewa calls these "Ne-naw-bo-zhoo's

track " and " Ne-naw-bo-zhoo's kettle where he dropped it when chasing his brother," and then they would drop a piece of tobacco in the kettle as a sacrifice, at the same time praying for luck and a prosperous journey to Montreal and back again to Michigan, their native home, when passing this place.

Now the cause of the great flood was this: The god of the deep was exceedingly jealous about Ne-naw-bo-zhoo's hunting dog (the great black wolf) and therefore, he killed it and made a feast with it and invited many guests, which were represented as sea-serpents, water-tigers, and every kind of monster of the deep, and they had a great feast. When Ne-naw-bo-zoo found out what had become of his hunting dog, he was furiously enraged, and determined to kill this god of the deep.

There was a certain place where he was accustomed to come on the shore with his hosts, particularly on very fine days, to sun themselves and enjoy the pleasure of being on a dry land. Ne-naw-bo-zhoo knew this lovely spot very well. So right away he strung up his bow and trimmed his arrows nicely, and went there to watch, transforming himself into a black stump, near where these water gods usually lay down to enjoy themselves. And therefore, one very fine day the sea-serpents and water-tigers were very anxious to come on shore as usual and asked their master to accompany them, but he replied: "I fear the great Ne-naw-bo-zhoo might be lurking about there, and he will kill me because I have killed and eaten up his black wolf." But he at last told them to go on shore and examine the place and report if it was all clear; but they found nothing unusual about the place except the old black stump, which they never before observed to be there. Therefore, they went back to their master and reported that nothing was there to be afraid of except the old black stump which they never noticed before. "Go again," said their master "and closely examine the stump; peradventure, it was he transfigured into the shape of the stump." So again they came ashore and one of the water-tigers climbed upon it,

inserting his long, sharp claws as he went up, but he saw nothing strange. So, also the sea-serpent went up to it and coiled himself around the stump so tight that Ne-naw-bo-zhoo nearly screamed with pain. At last the serpent uncoiled himself and they went back to their master and reported to him that it was nothing but an old stump. So the god of the sea concluded to come ashore with all his hosts, slowly and cautiously looking in every direction as he was still afraid that Ne-naw-bo-zhoo might be lurking around there and watching. Soon they were dozing upon the hot sand of the beach, then Ne-naw-bo-zhoo unmasked himself and fixed one of his best arrows into his bow and shot the god of the deep right through the heart. Then all the host started to pursue the slayer of their master. Ne-naw-bo-zhoo fled for his life; but he was pursued by the host with mountains of water. He ran all over the earth, still pursued with the mountains of water. So when he could not find any more dry land to run to, he commanded a great canoe to be formed in which he and the animals who were fleeing before the water, were saved. After they floated, Ne-naw-bo-zhoo wondered very much how deep was the water. Therefore, he ordered one of the beavers to go down to the bottom of the deep and bring up some earth if he could, as evidence that he did go to the bottom. So the beaver obeyed, and he went down, but the water was so deep the beaver died before he reached the bottom, and therefore, he came up floating as a dead beaver. Ne-naw-bo-zhoo drew him up into his canoe and resuscitated the beaver by blowing into his nostrils.

So he waited a little while longer, and afterwards he ordered the muskrat to go down; but the muskrat did not like the idea, for he had seen the beaver coming up lifeless. So he had to flatter him a little in order to induce him to go down, by telling him, "Now, muskrat, I know that thou art one of the best divers of all the animal creation; will you please go down and ascertain the depth of the water, and bring up some earth in your little paws, if you can, with which I shall try to make another world?"

Now go my little brother,"—the legend says that he called all the animal creation his little brothers,—“for we cannot always live on the waters.” At last the muskrat obeyed. He went down, and descended clear to the bottom of the water, and grabbed the earth and returned. But the water was yet so deep that before he reached the surface of the water, he expired.

As Ne-naw-bo-zhoo drew him up into his great canoe to resuscitate him, he observed the muskrat still grasping something in his little paws, and behold, it was a piece of earth. Then Ne-naw-bo-zhoo knew that the muskrat went clear to the bottom of the deep. He took this piece of earth and fixed it into a small parcel; which he fastened to the neck of the raven which was with him. Now, with this parcel, Ne-naw-bo-zhoo told the raven to fly to and fro all over the face of the waters; then the waters began to recede very fast, and soon the earth came back to its natural shape, just as it was before.

Again this same Ne-naw-bo-zhoo was once swallowed by a fish, and after being carried about in the midst of the deep, he came out again and lived as well as ever, like the Prophet Jonah. This Ottawa and Chippewa legend is, that once upon a time there was a great fish that resided in a certain lake, and as the people passed through this lake in their canoes, this great fish was accustomed to come after those crossing the lake and if he overtook them he would swallow them up, canoe and all, like swallowing a little clam in its shell. So Ne-naw-bo-zhoo said to himself, “This great fish will eat up all my nephews. Now I must somehow dispose of him.” And he went to the lake in his canoe expressly to look for the fish, singing daring songs as he went along. After he came in the midst of it, there he stopped, but kept on singing the following words: “Mishe-la-me-gwe Pe-le-wi-ko-lishim, Pe-la-wi-ko-lishim” —daring the fish to come and swallow him up. So at last the great fish, Mishi-la-me-gwe, did come and swallow the great Ne-naw-bo-zhoo. But this was just what he wanted. After being swallowed, he was able to dispose of this big fish, for with his

weapons he caused the fish such pain that he ran on the shore and died. After which, Ne-naw-bo-zhoo came out like the Prophet Jonah, and he went home and sat down to smoke his pipe, perfectly satisfied that he had saved many people by disposing of this great fish.

These are some of the legends told among the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, as related in their own language, which are in some things quite similar to the records of the Bible.



## CHAPTER X.

Traditions of the Ottawas Regarding Their Early History—Their Wars and Their Confederations With Other Tribes of Indians.

Very many centuries ago, before the discovery of the American continent by the white people, the traditions of the Ottawas say they lived along the banks of one of the largest tributaries of the St. Lawrence, now known as the Ottawa river. The Ottawas spread over the country around the head waters of this stream, subduing all other tribes of Indians which they happened to encounter, except the Chippewas and Stockbridge Indians. They have been always friendly and closely related with these tribes, and consequently no war-club was ever raised by either of these against the other. Their language is of the same root, as they could quite intelligently understand each other. Their manners and customs in every way correspond. Their legends, particularly respecting the flood, and their belief in the Supreme Being, the great creator of all things—Ketchi-mat-ne-do—is very much the same; also their belief in the evil spirit, whose habitation was under the earth. To this deity they offered sacrifices as well as to the other gods or deities. These offerings were called in those days peace-offerings and down-offerings. They never sacrificed flesh of animals to the evil spirit. Their offering to this deity was parched corn pounded, then cooked into hominy; this was sacrificed to the evil spirit, not because they loved him, but to appease his wrath.

Although the Chippewas speak almost the same language as the Ottawas and Stockbridge Indians, yet they seem to belong to another family of Indians, as they are much taller than the Ottawas and Stockbridges, and broader across the shoulders—having a full chest, very erect and striding firmly in their walking. They were much more numerous than the Ottawa Indians. They extended