

is celebrated for its fishing. There are several effigies of fish in this region." (Figure 213 on page 312 shows "fish effigy mound on the east end of Lake Monona. Another illustration shows fish-shaped tumuli at Delavan lake).

FISH CLANS

A surviving testimonial that fish played a vital part in the economic life of the earliest Wisconsin Indians is found in the so-called "origin myths" of various native clans existing to this modern day.

In each tribe there existed a division on the basis of kinship into clans or gentes. The names given to these were usually those of animals, birds, reptiles and of natural objects from which its members claimed descent, or which were regarded in common as guardian deities. These were known as their totems. The term "clan" implies to the female, the term "gens" to the male line.

Among the Mascouten

The Mascoutens had among their totems the golden carp, the tortoise and the crab. Two of their fifteen gentes were the N'ma, sturgeon, and the N'mapena, carp. Among the Water Phratry was the Fish Clan, the Kigo's. The Muskigwa'ni, or Sunfish band, of the Prairie Potawatomi had its habitat around the Muskego lakes in Waukesha county.

Native testimony among the Mascouten holds that the tribal chieftainship in olden times was an office hereditary in the Fish clan.

Water, or the Sea, is one of the archaic deities of the Mascouten. Its principal inhabitant is the Merman, visualized as being with a fish's body and a man's head. He is also known to the Sauk and the Chippewa, and perhaps corresponds to the "Man-Sturgeon" of the Menomini.

This tradition is perpetuated by the origin myth of the Fish clan which relates that "a great feast was given in the honor of the fish. A trout came and told them that the Fish clan would be the greatest division of their people, and none should ever equal it."

The interesting Fish Dance ceremony of the Mascouten has been recorded by Alanson Skinner as follows: