

Among the Menomini

Dr. Walter J. Hoffman, in his report on the Menomini appearing in the 14th annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1892, mentions the Menomini totems or gentes in the order of their importance. Third rank in the Bear Phratry was held by the "Miqka'no" or Turtle clan; seventh place was the "Noma'eu" or Sturgeon clan, and eighth rank belonged to the "Maku'ti or Sunfish clan.

From Alanson Skinner's study of "The Material Culture of the Menomini," we learn that "Sturgeon played so important a part in the early Menomini economy that they receive frequent mention in their mythology. One of the first acts of the Great Underground Bear, after he had metamorphosed himself into the original human ancestor of the tribe, was to make a bark canoe and a spear, that he, and his people, after him, might take fish. The myth over the separation of the Menomini tribe ascribes this to a dispute over sturgeon."

Among the Sauk

The Sauk were a great canoe people while they were in the Great Lakes region, using both the birch bark canoe and dug-out proficiently to carry on their lake fishing.

J. N. B. Hewitt, writing in the "Handbook of American Indians" gives among the fourteen Sauk gentes three identified with fish, namely, Trout, Sturgeon and Bass. On the other hand, Marston, in naming twelve Sauk gentes in "Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi and the Great Lakes Region", mentions the Sturgeon, Perch and Black Bass. Alanson Skinner, in his "Observations on the Ethnology of the Sauk Indians," vouches for but one Fish gens, the Trout, the Sauk name for the Fish gens being "Pakahamouwa'-sujik" which translated signifies "tight bodied people."

Sauk tradition holds that the office of tribal chieftain was hereditary in the Fish clan of the tribe.

FISHING SEASONS

Another testimonial of the important role that fishing played in the economic life of the early Wisconsin Indians