

Indian Customs and Early Recollections¹

By Elizabeth Thérèse Baird

The following papers appeared originally in the *Green Bay Gazette* during May, June, and July, 1882—of which the editors of that journal well said: "The series on *Indian Customs* will be a valuable one, possessing at once the charm of delightful recital and romantic interest that clings to the subject, as well as a fund of information that has in small measure only been given the public from any source; and soon to be followed with a series of *Early Recollections* of this section from the same generous and accurate source."

Mrs. Baird, the author of those valuable and interesting papers, was born at Prairie du Chien, April 24th, 1810—the daughter of Capt. Henry Monroe Fisher, the earliest American pioneer at that place, and long a public officer and Indian trader on that frontier. Her grandmother, Madame Thérèse Schindler, *nee* Marcot, of Mackinaw, was a granddaughter of Kewanoquat, or Returning Cloud, a distinguished Ottawa chief, and of Mijakwatawa, or Clear Day Woman. Though Mrs. Baird's Indian inheritance, as she expresses it, is not great, yet like the descendants of Pocahontas, she "boasts of all she has."

Just before the War of 1812 broke out, Mrs. Fisher had taken her little daughter with her to visit her parents at Mackinaw; their home was broken up at Prairie du Chien by the war, and they never returned there to reside. Reared among the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians at Mackinaw, and fifty-eight years ago removing to Green Bay, on her marriage, where the Menomonees constantly resorted for trade, she has had an excellent school in which to study Indian habits and customs; and, as her sketches show, she has profited by her opportunities. These studies—the result of almost a life-time's observations—will prove important acquisitions to our knowledge of Indian character; and, we have reason to hope, that Mrs. Baird will pen still further sketches from the rich store-house of her aboriginal recollections. L. C. D.

Indian Customs

In jotting down a few notes concerning the Indians of the Northwest and their customs, I choose to begin with the woman, she being the most useful, if not the most important member, as their own customs will show.

¹ See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xiv, xv, for continuation of Mrs. Baird's "Recollections."—R. G. T.