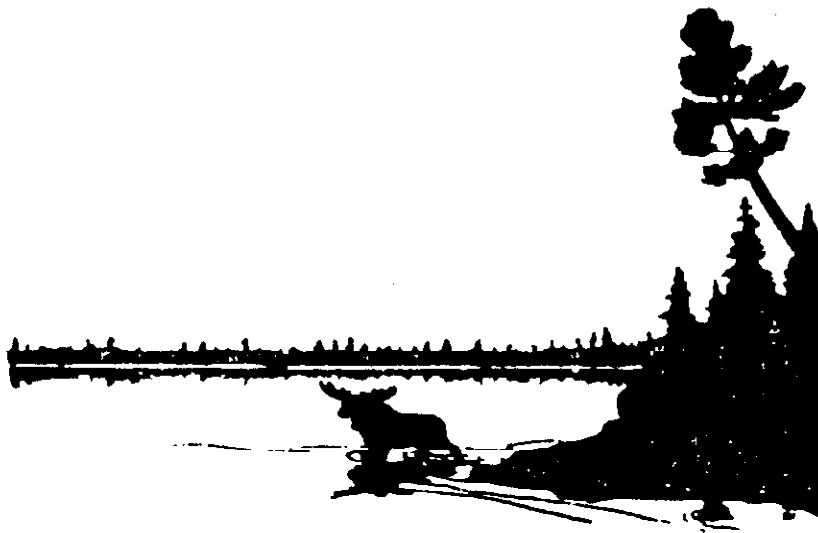


Chief Busticoggin



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BUSTI AND GEE WEE OO, EARLY 1900s

BUSTICOGAN

PROLOGUE

In an Indian encampment along the English River in what is now Ontario, Canada, a baby boy was born in 1830 they called Busticogan, a boy who would grow up to become a Chief and a highly respected friend to settlers who homesteaded in Northern Minnesota.

Who was this Busticogan ? He died 80 years later in our Nation's capitol. He had dealt with Voyaguers and fur traders, Indian Agents, Missionaries, soldiers, surveyors, loggers and homesteaders. He had been a friend and helper to all.

He had seen his people move from bark wigwams and birch bark tipis to log houses; he saw his children dressed like proper Victorian ladies and gentlemen.

He had sailed on steam ships, ridden miles on trains. He had seen gas lights, and an early automobile. Instead of a bow and arrow, he hunted with a fine English shotgun.

Busticogan was a legend in his own time. He made a dramatic entrance into the pages of history during the 1866 Ojibway Treaty negotiations in Washington, D. C. He remained a prominent figure in the Bigfork Valley and the Nett Lake areas - eventually becoming the head chief of the Bois Forte Indians.

Living the first five years of my life in a log homestead cabin in "Dustitown"(as the township was called), and my legal residence always within the County where Busti had lived, I heard many stories of the Chief. Some seemed quite "far out", but when I began researching his life, answers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Minnesota Historical Society, and many other sources fascinated me.

He's been gone now for over 80 years, but is still fondly remembered, especially by the children of the homesteaders who knew him.

Who was this Busticogan ?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to Frank Anselmo, Bill Marshall, Ralph Stirratt, and to all others who have helped in some way with the gathering and compiling of this material.

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The English River in Canada is a beautiful, wooded stream that runs through several lakes. Its rocky outcroppings sometimes erupt in rapids and waterfalls, and fish and wildlife still abound, as it did when a band of Bois Forte Indians camped along its shores in the early 1800s.

Abraham Lincoln was a young man, helping his father prepare to move from Kentucky to Illinois, when a baby boy was born in 1830 to a young mother in an Indian Camp somewhere along the English River. The American Revolution had ended less than fifty years before. It was only 26 years after Lewis and Clark had made their great exploratory journey to the West Coast.

The Indians were of the band they called Sugwaundugahwininewug, "Men of the Thick Fir Woods", and who the voyageurs called "Bois Fortes". They were of the tribe they called Anishinaubay¹; the white men then called them Ojibways², and now, most of the time they are known as Chippewas.

It was customary with that band, if a baby was born in an established encampment, that the mother would enter a "birthing wigwam" when labor began. Other women would assist her, and when the baby was born, it was sometimes brought to the father, to show in wigwams around the camp.

Often the baby was not named at birth, referred to only as Ah Bee No Gee (Baby) or Ghee Wee Zance (boy). Sometimes it was months later before the parents picked a "namer", who would make a feast, invite 5 or 6 guests, and give a speech thanking the parents for the great honor they had bestowed upon him. The name given was often one derived from a dream. This fine baby boy was named "Busticogan", possibly a corruption of the ancient name of their tribe, "Daouichtigouin."

The mother would want her robust "Ghee Wee Zance" to grow up straight and rigorous, and Busticogan probably spent the first year of his life in a cradleboard. It was a wide board about two feet long, with a curved piece of wood on the bottom to keep the baby from falling out. Birchbark the same shape as the curved bottom board was tied to the board, and filled with soft, dried moss. The naked baby was placed in the birchbark tray. In

1. "The People".
2. "People of puckered mocassins".

cold weather the baby's feet were wrapped in rabbit skins with the hair next to the baby's skin; or the soft down of cattails was placed around them. The cradleboard furnished the warmth and protection the baby needed, and the mother carried the baby in the board, with a headband around her forehead. The mother's devotion to her baby was very intense; she nursed him for about two years. If he was "ailing" she held him by the fire in the wigwam to warm him; if he became chafed, she rubbed him with a healing powder made from rotten oak. She never let him cry if she could help it.

Often an Ojibway would have several names. His father might have a dream, and give his son a name. When a boy was around 12, his father or grandfather would take him deep in the woods and fix a little platform in a tree. There the boy would stay for several days, without food, until he had a dream or vision of his future. That dream would usually determine his "official" name. Evidently young Busti dreamed of going to the mountains, as the name he used in dealing with the government was always "Bay-baum-ad-hew-esch-cang", meaning "He who travels on the mountains".

(Note: In various documents you will find the names Busti-cogan and Bay-baum-ad-hew-esch-cang both spelled in a variety of ways, as the hearer wrote down phonetically the verbal translation. Busti of course, never learned to spell or write his name.)

The Ojibways, a branch of the Algonquins in the East, had migrated Westward following the French voyageurs, trapping beaver and trading for copper kettles, wool blankets, and guns. Armed with guns, they drove their old enemies, the Sioux, from the wooded areas of what is now Southern Ontario and Northern Minnesota. A great animosity existed between the two tribes, and although the wooded areas were securely in Ojibwa hands, sporadic raids and clashes occurred between the tribes from time to time.

Busti spoke often of his mother, but nothing is known of his father. Busti's hatred of the Sioux was particularly intense and it's possible his Dad may have been killed in a skirmish with them.

THE BIG MOVE

In the early 1840's some disease apparently hit the beaver along the English River, for they became very scarce. Rabbits, some years exceedingly plentiful - and a favorite for food - were also on the "down" side.

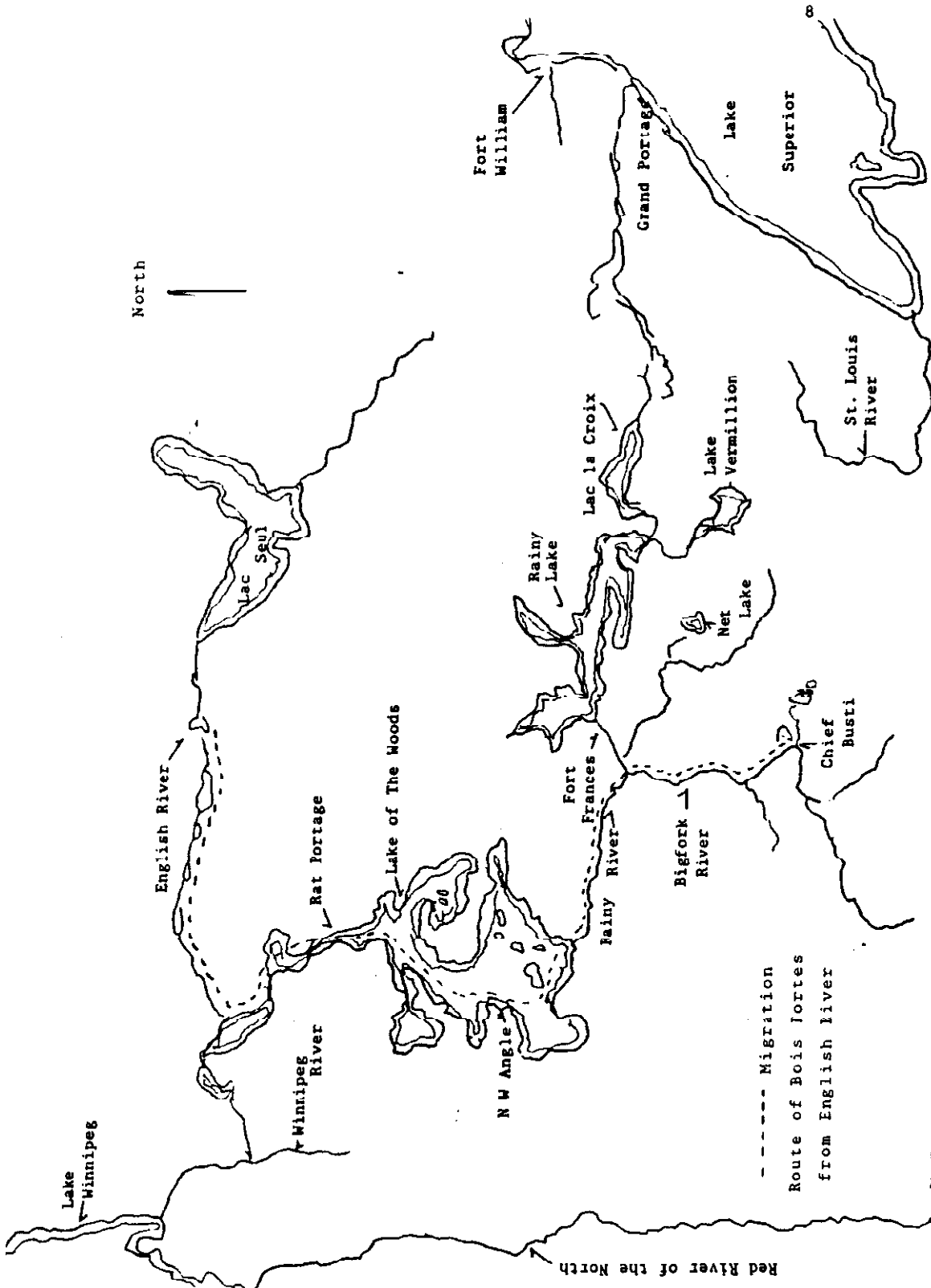
Many members of the Bois Fort tribe were already living in what is now Northern Minnesota, and the group along the English River decided to move South too. One spring day the band moved West down the English River in a flotilla of canoes to the Winnipeg River, up that to Lake of the Woods, through the lake to the Rainy River, and up the Rainy to the mouth of the Bigfork, where ancient Indian Burial Mounds overlooked the junction of the two streams.

How excited young Busti must have been ! The canoes went up the Bigfork, portaged around what we now know as "Big Falls", past a little trading outpost on what is now called the old Parson place, and portaged around a smaller falls (Little American), where some of the band encamped. Others went up the river to Deer Creek, followed that to Big Deer Lake, and made camp there.

Busti and his mother - it is not known if his father was alive and with them at that time or not - built a bark wigwam on a flat above the river downstream from a series of rapids. Less than a quarter of a mile over a 40 ft. ridge was a beautiful little lake, a lake that would eventually be called Busti.

Cross country they had moved South about 200 miles; by the route they had come is was no doubt a 500 mile trip, but it was worth it ! Beaver were plentiful here, and rabbits, fish, moose and other wild life abounded. Great wild rice fields and maple sugar groves were discovered upstream. Busti, whose name meant "Mountain Traveler", had discovered no mountains, but he had found the place he would call home the rest of his life.

In the next few years Busti grew in stature to a 6'2" tall straight-as-an-arrow young man. While still a young man, according to white settlers who came to know Busti well, several noteworthy events took place.



Busti was at the Old Parson Farm Trading post when a drunken Indian tried to scalp the factor. James Knight, who came to know Busti well, told what Busti told him:

"The Indian was going to split the factor's head, the factor at the Hudson Bay Post, below where Parson lived - the old Hudson Bay Farm. He said he was going to kill him with a tomahawk. Busti said he killed the Indian with his two hands. (Held his big hands together indicating he choked him.) That's all he ever said to me about it."

The handsomely engraved 10 ga. Double barreled shotgun made in England that Busti carried and cherished the rest of his life was purportedly the factor's own gun, given to Busti in gratitude. (Note: the 1897 Sears, Roebuck Catalogue -which was of course many years later than this incident,- has double barreled 10 ga. shotguns ranging in price from \$6.95 to \$189.50. The \$6.95 model was more like those most Indians obtained from traders for their pelts.)

Godfrey Knight said that: *"Forays - Sioux against Chippewa, Chippewa against Sioux, were common in this area until about Civil War time. Busti held a great bitterness toward the Sioux."* Rumors of Busti being involved in a battle with the Sioux at Battle Lake could not be substantiated, but James Knight said *"One battle took place about two miles South of Bigfork near the Skallman area there, in about 1855. Busti said they had trouble with the Sioux, but that they chased them out."*

James, who spent a lot of time with Busti, said Busti never spoke to him of a Battle Lake fight.

After the skirmish South of Bigfork, near the lake that is now known as Busti Lake, the men rested after the Sioux had fled. The women were following after their menfolk, and they came in canoes with birchbark tipi rolls and food. They made camp there for several days celebrating the victory over their ancient foes. It was a festive time. Then, one night when the wild geese were going south, Busti's beloved mother, "Nemo" died. They buried her there, between the lake and the Rice River. Busti and his beloved mother had been very close, and he spoke of her often to his white homesteader friends.

MAY MAUSH KAH WAUM AK QUOD OKE

Busti must have been lonely after his mother passed away, but he seemed to be always traveling. He became well known among the Bois Forte people, scattered out as they were. Where, or when, he picked a young Indian girl to be his Squaw we do not know. We do know May Maush Kah Waum Ak Quod Oke was a fairly short girl, with a real twinkle in her smile. Where she came from, or when it was that she became Busti's squaw, is unknown. She was unusually talkative in the presence of men, at a time when most women let their men to the talking. She laughed heartily at a good joke, and enjoyed smoking her little pipe. James Knight remembers her:

"She was a fairly short little woman, chubby. One of the first things we noticed was her face; her right eye was missing, and the side of her face carried a big blotch of blue green powder marks. Evidently a gun had blown up, or had been fired at close range, and took her eye with it. She was unusual in her own way too. As a general rule womenfolk stayed in the background. They didn't take part in the conversation or associate with men. But she stepped right in and took her part same as anybody else. Even with that one eye gone, she sewed beautiful beadwork in that smokey wigwam. She always tested the temperature of her tea with her finger tips.

Busti let her carry the packsack and break trail in the winter. She carried her load all night. When they traveled on the snow, she pulled a tobaggan and carried the pack - that gave her weight for traction, you know.

He (Busti) fell out of his canoe once on a cold October day coming down here about a half a mile above our (Vic Knight's) place. She fished him out, and he was wet, and they came to our place. We asked him what had happened, and she told about it. She laughed & cackled."

Busti never called her by name, but referred to her as his "Gee wee oo" (wife). She never used his name either, but called him "Ee nee nee" (man).

Especially after the children were grown, they were usually seen together. They worked together hunting moose, ricing, making maple syrup, with Gee wee oo usually having the heavy end of things.

CHIEF BUSTICOGAN

Busti became well known to other Chiefs of the Bois Forte band, and to other Chippewa Chiefs in the North half of the state. He was a friend of Hole in the Day, the Younger, and it is thought by some that he accompanied him to Washington in 1862. It's amazing how messages spread to the far reaches of the tribe, and also amazing how much they traveled.

In August of 1854 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George Manypenny, ordered a Treaty Council with the Ojibways to extinguish title to certain lands at the head of Lake Superior, and to establish reservations as future homes for the Lake Superior bands. The meeting place was to be at La Pointe on Madeline Island, offshore from present Bayfield, Wisconsin. One month later, 4000 Chiefs, Headmen, and followers assembled there. (A treaty was signed, but the Indians refused to move.)

Also amazing was how much they traveled. They were great walkers, always traveling single file. In winter, they made snowshoes and walked on them if the snow was loose. And, in a country abundant with lakes and streams, they of course, canoed. The birchbark canoe was a marvelous craft - a real experience for a novice to ride in.

George Catlin, a world traveler and eminent painter of Indians and Indian scenery, wrote: *"The birchbark canoe of the Chippeways is perhaps, the most beautiful and light model of all the watercrafts ever invented. They are generally made with the rind of one birch tree, and so ingeniously shaped, and sewed together with the roots of the tamarac, which they call 'wat tap' that they are watertight, and ride on the water as light as a cork. They gracefully lean and dodge about, under the skilful balance of an Indian, or the ugliest squaw; but, like everything wild, are timid under the guidance of a white man; and if he be not an experienced equilibriest he is sure to get two or three times soused in his first endeavors at familiar acquaintance with them."*

Another early writer called the birch bark canoe of the Ojibwa *"The chief instrument of his success, whether fishing, hunting, trade, or war."*

According to early homesteaders, Busti made the best birchbark canoes they had ever seen. He charged his white neighbors \$6 or \$8 for them, depending on the size. He made his paddles out of white cedar, and even had some specially designed ones for silent paddling when sneaking up on game. He always used a canoe that was in excellent condition.

The "Handbook of American Indians" states *"A Chief may be generally defined as a political officer whose distinctive functions are to execute the ascertained will of a definite group of persons -----, to conserve their customs, traditions and religion. He exercises legislative, judicative, and executive powers delegated to him in accordance with custom for the conservation and promotion of the common weal."*

Bay-baum-ad-hew-esch-cang, or Busticogan, as we know him, was an excellent orator; big and strong, and his exploits and common sense were noted by his fellowmen. At a comparatively young age, he was recognized as a Chief, and was present at councils of the tribe. He made decisions affecting his people, and was allowed to represent them at the payment of annuities and at treaty councils with the Great White Father.

Gradually most of the Indians who had come down from the English River country moved eastward around the Lake Vermillion area, but Busti and Gee wee oo, although they traveled a great deal, always called their spot on the Bigfork River their home.

The Bois Fortes, "Men of the thick fir woods", had blankets and copper kettles and guns obtained in exchange for beaver skins with the fur traders, but they generally clung to their old ways and lived entirely off the land. They made twine by twisting fibers of the basswood - in the spring, the bark was stripped off, the inner layer was peeled off and tied up in packages. It was carefully guarded for use in sewing and in making mats. (The bark was pulled into shreds after it had been thoroughly soaked in water and twisted into twine. With this twine and birchbark they made bark dishes, rice baskets, birchbark buckets.) They also used a rawhide cord for heavier work.

They knew the land. It produced food for them, and every thing they needed for shelter and transportation.

THE GREAT VERMILLION GOLD RUSH !

Gold ! Excitement ran rampant on the streets of St. Paul on September 19, 1865. The Philadelphia mint had reported to Gov. Miller the day before that a large specimen of quartz rock from Lake Vermillion in Northeastern Minnesota had been assayed. The sample yielded gold ore at \$25.63 a ton, better than the average best paying mines in California. The "St. Paul Pioneer" speculated the discovery of gold at Lake Vermillion would "*Immediately turn the tide of Western emigration to Minnesota.*" The "Pioneer" dispatched a reporter, Ossian E. Dodge, at once to the gold fields. Writing under the name of "Oro Fino", he took a train as far as Superior, Wisconsin, and a canoe the rest of the way, often through rough and perilous waters. On October 24, 1865, the "Pioneer" reported Oro had landed his canoe on an "*Immense bed of iron ore ---- with gold veins from three inches to ten feet in width, and --- many miles in length !*"

Wow ! Rumors of minerals in Northeastern Minnesota had long persisted, and the Minnesota Legislature had recently appropriated \$2000 to survey mineral prospects. A geological survey of Lake Superior lands in 1864 had reported beds of copper, iron and slate in the area. Gov. Miller (a regimental commander in the civil war) had appointed Henry Eames to the position of "State Geologist", and Henry's brother, Richard, his assistant. They set out for Northeastern Minnesota, and reported finding iron ore outcroppings and veins of gold and silver bearing quartz. It was a specimen they had taken that the Governor had forwarded to the Chief Assayer at Philadelphia. The Governor sent a second sample to a New York chemist, who found gold that assayed out at \$41.01 a ton.

Gold fever struck not only St. Paul. Excited investors in New York and Chicago became interested. Another "49" gold rush was envisioned!

But, THERE WAS A HITCH.

Yes, there was a hitch. Some chiefs of the Bois Forte Ojibways claimed that the Western side of Lake Vermillion had not been ceded by the Treaty of 1854, or, if so, not ceded legally. Only one Bois Forte chief had signed the treaty, and the other chiefs claimed he lacked the authority to negotiate for the tribe. Even that chief denied "touching the pen". Many of the Bois Fortes were settled on a tract of land that included the Western shore of Lake Vermillion.

The Editor of the "Superior Gazette" sided with the Indians, and warned that trouble was bound to develop when gold seekers swarmed into the area if the matter were not "*at once amicably settled.*"

The "St. Paul Pioneer" suggested instead "*a military post be established to enable the country be opened to gold mining.*" The editor argued that "*The treaties of 1854 and 1855 (6) had awarded the federal government clear and undisputed title to the land.*"

Tensions ran high. D. George Morrison, the Register of Deeds at Superior, who had helped Chief Hole in the Day negotiate with the government a few years prior, wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on October 5, 1865, requesting that a new treaty be negotiated with the Bois Forte tribe. Commissioner Cooley replied that the treaty of 1856 had not yet come before the Senate for ratification, and "*I must decline to allow the Indians to visit Washington during the coming winter. No good to them is likely to result from such a visit, which at that inclement time of the year must be attended with considerable additional expense.*"

L. E. Webb, U. S. Indian Agent, Lake Superior Indian Agency, wrote a long letter to Commissioner Cooley on Nov. 8, 1865, arguing that the Bois Forte chiefs should be called to Washington for a treaty. He reported that at the recent annuity payment at Grand Portage the Chiefs requested a council that they might communicate through the agent to their Great White Father, and he went on to say: ----- "*It may be proper for me to state in this connection what has been said to me by these Indians during the past four years.*

In the fall of 1861 they were notified as usual of the time of payment at Grand Portage. At the time of my arrival they

requested a council upon matters pertaining to their interests. They requested that the Treaty of 1854 be read and explained, which request was granted. They then said they never signed that treaty, that they never had sold their lands, that there were nine chiefs of the Bois Fortes and that the name of only one appeared signed to the Treaty, that even if he did sign it (which he emphatically denied) that the rest were not bound by his actions. ----- They have reiterated the same this year.

It has been apparent to me from the first visit to them, that in the future some difficulty would arise in this matter. I am firmly of the opinion that the interests of the Govt require that the matter should be settled at an early date.

The Bois Forte Indians live almost entirely by hunting. They have had but little intercourse with the whites, and I have always found them truthful, loyal and disposed to be governed by good counsel.

The excitement produced by the discovery of gold will undoubtedly cause a large migration into the territory in question, and I deem it very important that the questions involved in the title to this land should be settled soon. I do not believe a ratification of the Treaty made with Gilbert in 1856 would satisfy them.--- So long a time has elapsed that in my opinion it would be advisable to make a new treaty.

Very Respectfully Your Obt Servant

L. E. Webb

Indian Agent"

Senator Alexander Ramsay of Minnesota intervened, and arrangements were made for a council of Bois Forte Chiefs in Washington. Traveling by steamboat and by rail, nine Chiefs and Headmen of the tribe along with Mr. Morrison, Agent Webb, and some interpreters set out for the nation's capitol. Webb reported to Commissioner Cooley that the delegation had arrived in Washington on Feb. 27, 1866, and that they considered themselves authorized by their people to make a Treaty with the Government. There were 5 chiefs and 4 headmen in the delegation; Babawmadjcweshcang (Busticogan) was second in rank.

While the Bois Forte Chiefs were in Washington attempting to settle the land ownership question, gold fever continued at a feverish pitch in St. Paul. Gold mining companies were organized, some capitalized for as much as \$500,000. Henry Sibley was President and Governor Miller the Secretary of one such company, "The Minnesota Gold Mining Company." Stocks were sold. Miners laws were enacted by the legislature. Eames boasted "*This country, when developed, will be a second California.*" A road was built from Duluth to Lake Vermillion, 80 miles long. Assayers came in. The townsite of Winton was laid out. A sawmill, a blacksmith shop, 3 stamp mills, and a post office were built. Saloons and "other places of entertainment" were opened. A canoe factory was established. Although the road wasn't completed until the end of Feb., 1866, teamsters hauled in an estimated 75 to 100 tons of equipment before spring thaws made the road impassable. (The next winter, 1866-67, as many as 80 teams and wagons set forth daily to Lake Vermillion from Duluth.) The legislature passed laws permitting miners to form a "Mining District" and to pass the rules and regulations they deemed necessary.

Gold ? No luck. None was found. An interesting enigma of Minnesota History. Several years later, in 1880, private parties hired a geologist from New York, Albert Chester. He collected specimens from a number of quartz veins and found - not a trace of gold !

No dividends for the stockholders of the 15 Gold Mining Companies ! No bonanzas for the individual prospectors either.

Many good things did come out of the Gold Rush though. The road was built from Duluth to Tower; it paved the way for some men involved in the gold rush, like George Stuntz and Lewis Merritt, to explore for iron; it brought about the Treaty of 1866 wherein the Bois Forte Indians relinquished their claim to Lake Vermillion, and it thrust to the forefront a new, young, powerful Indian chief - Bay Baum We Che Es Chang, - our "Busticogan", who would later become head chief of the Boise Forte band.

THE TREATY OF 1866

The Bois Forte delegation arrived in Washington on Feb. 27, 1866. Commissioner of Indian Affairs D. N. Cooley was well aware of the need for a quick settlement, having been pressured by the Minnesota Congressional delegation as well as informed by the agent of the Lake Superior district. The Bois Forte Chiefs realized the government's need to quickly settle the issue, and their shrewd negotiations resulted in the treaty signed on April 7, 1866 being called one of the most beneficial treaties (for the Indians) ever entered into by the U. S. Government.

It provided for the Bois Fortes to cede all rights and claims to the Lake Vermillion area, and lands to the East. In return, the President would set aside a tract of not less than 100,000 acres, including "Netor Assabacona" Lake, now known as Nett Lake, and, at the insistance of Chief Busti, "One township on Grand Fork river, at mouth of Deer creek". (As this area had not been surveyed no formal designation of this reserve was made at that time.) The government agreed to build a blacksmith shop, school house, an agency house, and 8 houses for the Chiefs. they agreed to pay for the annual support of a blacksmith and an assistant, a school teacher, and a farm instructor; for annuity payments of \$11,000 annually for 20 years. Three thousand five hundred dollars of this would be paid to them in money, per capita; one thousand dollars in provisions, ammunition, and tobacco, and six thousand five hundred dollars to be distributed to them in goods and "other articles suited to their wants and condition."

D. N. Cooley, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote the "Hon Jas Harlan, Secretary of the Interior" on April 9th, 1866 transmitting the treaty made with the Bois Forte Indians. He mentioned the discovery of gold that had made it advisable to make the treaty and hoped it could be quickly approved by the Senate, *"if it meets with your approval and that of the President. --- This treaty is regarded as a very favorable one for the Indians, more so, perhaps, than any other that has been negotiated with any of the northern tribes.---"* I deem it my duty in transmitting these papers, to call your special attention to the provisions of Article IV of the treaty which provides for the payment by the United States, the sum of \$50,000 to the chiefs

upon the ratification of the treaty, to enable them to establish their people upon the new reservation, and for the purchase of useful articles and presents for their people."

The other men on the journey, for valuable assistance rendered, were given 80 acres of land. This included D. George Morrison, Peter, Francis and Vincent Roy, Joseph Gurnoe and Eustace Rossaire.

The United States also agreed to pay the expenses of transportation and subsistence of the delegates, not to exceed ten thousand dollars.

The treaty was signed (by "touching the pen") by all the Chiefs and headmen of the Bois Forte delegation. The "Mountain Traveler", Babawmadjeweschang is the second Chief to sign.

The treaty was quickly approved by the Senate, who changed the amount of money to the Chiefs for gifts for their people from \$50,000 to \$30,000. The chiefs accepted the change; the Senate ratified the treaty of April 7, 1866 on April 26, 1866, and the Treaty was proclaimed May 5, 1866.

President Chester A. Arthur, by Executive Order on Aug. 15, 1883 established the "Deer Creek Reserve".

"Agreeably to the provisions contained in the closing sentence of the first clause of Article 3 of the Treaty of Apr. 7, 1866 (34 Stat. at Large, p. 765) with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians, it is hereby ordered that a township of land in the State of Minnesota, towit, Township 62 north. Range 25 west of the fourth principal meridian, the same is hereby set apart for the perpetual use and occupancy of said Indians-."

(Note: Township 62-25 was not surveyed until 1895, but 62-24 (Big Deer Lake area) was surveyed in 1882, just to the East of 62-25, commonly known as "Bustitown" after the old Chief.)

The delegation returned to Minnesota, their "mission accomplished". The chiefs had \$30,000 (probably in 'hard' money), promises of a reservation with lots of wild rice beds, houses for the chiefs, a school, a blacksmith shop, farming help, and bigger annuities.

Busti returned to Minnesota a hero. Thirty six years old, the next to head chief of the band, Busti was highly respected. Although he always lived apart from the main body of the band, he traveled among them extensively and they visited his wigwam on the narrow strip of land between the Bigfork River and the lake that bears his name.

The reservation was established at Nett Lake, and, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty, a blacksmith house and school were built, as well as houses for the chiefs. They built a house for Busti by his wigwam on the Bigfork, about 16 x 24', all dovetailed, with oak logs on the bottom.

It was a fine house. They never slept in it, but did use it for storage. They preferred their traditional wigwam.



SMALLPOX

Any oldtimer who has heard stories of Chief Busti and his "Gee wee oo", has heard how they saved the men in a logging camp (or a surveyor's camp) during a smallpox epidemic, and, as a result, a grateful government gave Busti the township that is called by his name. Winding, scenic State Highway No. 1 East of Effie is crooked and curvy because it follows the trail through the woods Busti used in going to Hibbing to get medical help for the smallpox victims. That's a story I heard when I was young. We know that the township was awarded to the band due to Busti's negotiations in Washington in 1866, but many publications, in referring to Chief Busticogan, state the township was given him for saving a camp down with Smallpox.

During the "Great Depression" of the 1930s, one of the WPA (Works Progress Administration) projects in Minnesota was interviewing long time residents re local history. Frans Logdahl, who lived in Wildwood township between Effie and Northome, stated:

"The old Caldwell trail ran almost by our door. This trail, running from the old Caldwell Camp on Caldwell Brook, to where it joined what we called the Bena trail somewhere in Grattan Township. The old Caldwell Camp was located on the South side of Caldwell Brook in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 1, R 26 T 151, now in Koochi-ching County. There is little remains of the old camp but the mound where Chief Busticogan buried 18 or 19 men who died with smallpox. This mound is 12 or 14 feet square. It is marked by several large trees, some having crosses hacked in the bark, and a couple with some form of Indian signs. When I first saw the place there was the remains of an old log pen around the mound. It is said that these men that were buried by the Indians were the men that were left in camp sick when the rest of the men went out with the drive in the spring of 1883. It is said that a number of men were also buried by Caldwell during the winter. It was at this camp that the papers were served on Caldwell, but at that time most of Caldwell's logs were already in Canada, or almost there on the drive.---

--- A few years after I came here a bunch of us was fighting a forest fire near the old campsite. We got to talking about the story, and some of us wondered if it were true. So we decided to dig into the mound and see what we could find. We dug in a couple of feet and found no bones, only ashes. This caused us to think that the Indians had burned the bodies before burial, or had placed them in a small out-building of some sort, and then set fire to the building, finally covering the remains of the building and all it contained with dirt." -(Frans Logdahl)

Bill Marshall, going through 1938 "Grand Rapids Herald-Reviews", came across this article:

Believe Skeletons Found in Grattan Small Pox Victims

Mike McAlpine, who is generally conceded to have lived in Itasca county longer than almost any other white man, has an explanation concerning the identity of the persons whose skeletons were found up at Grattan township some weeks ago. Mr. McAlpine believes that these skeletons are those of Indians who died of the smallpox epidemic which raged in this county during the winter of 1883 and, to some degree, the following year.

When the epidemic of smallpox became known to state authorities in January of 1883, Dr. Rosser of Brainerd, who was a state health officer, appointed Mr. McAlpine to have charge of the situation in this part of the state. Mr. McAlpine's orders were to let no persons go through Grand Rapids toward Aitkin for fear they might spread the disease. All those who came to this struggling village were examined and watched and if they showed indications of having smallpox were sent to a pesthouse which was maintained on the south side of the Mississippi river. Mr. McAlpine says that to the best of his collection not one person committed

to the pesthouse escaped death from this virulent form of smallpox.

The disease affected the lumberjacks in the camps scattered over northern Minnesota. Mr. McAlpine owned a ranch at the head of Trout lake where the I. A. Martin home now stands. Mr. McAlpine was directed in the spring by the health authorities to burn these buildings because of the danger of infection after a number of persons had died in the buildings from smallpox. A logger named Caldwell, whose name was afterward given to a brook which flows into the Bigfork river in Koochiching county, had a large number of men working in the woods. More than 40 of them are reported to have died from this disease.

Whole families of Indians contracted the disease and without anyone to cut wood for them or care for them were found by the state health officials in the spring lying dead in their wigwams. The men in the employ of the state dug graves where all members of the family were buried, then burned the wigwams. Mr. McAlpine believes these skeletons found in Grattan township are

the result of such an occurrence.

Chief Busticogan, after whom Bustitown is named, was the hero of the smallpox epidemic. Busticogan was one of the few Indians, who in former years had the disease, and recovered. A crew of United States surveyors were working northeast of the present Bustitown and members of the party contracted the disease. Busticogan happened that way and learned of the situation. He turned in and cared for the surveyors, supplying them with fuel and treating them with such rude medicines as were available. All of them recovered and to show its gratitude, the United States government is said to have awarded Busticogan his choice of the lands in the township which bears his name. A farm was also cleared and plowed for him and a log cabin erected for his use. Busticogan afterwards lived in a wigwam pitched beside the log cabin.

Many more incidents might be told concerning the smallpox epidemic which decimated the Chippewa tribe and was responsible for the death of so many lumber men between January, 1883 and the close of the following winter.

James Knight said both Busti and his Squaw had pox marks. He once asked the Chief about the Caldwell Camp incident:

"Acted like it didn't amount to much. Been up on the Rainy River, in Ontario. Coming back by the camp they seen the water hole was frozen over, no smoke coming out of the buildings.

"They went up to find out the reason. They found out - everybody was down. Nobody even able to take care of horses. So they stayed there until some were up and around, and able to take care of themselves, and then they came on home."

The Biennial Report of the Minnesota State Board of Health for 1882-1884 reports in some detail on the Smallpox outbreak, which eventually affected 8 logging camps, with 43 whites and 35 Indians dying from it.

On Dec. 18, 1882 a lumberjack from Caldwell's Camp had been brought up the river to Dr. E. H. Belyea in Grand Rapids, suffering from smallpox. He reported the case to the State Board of Health. The Board of Health Secretary responded by letter of Dec. 22, 1882 to Dr. Belyea, asking him to go to the camp the man had come from, and to try and prevent the spread of the disease. He ordered 30 pts. of vaccine sent to Grand Rapids, and asked a Dr. Van Cleve from Duluth to come to Grand Rapids to assist. The Health Board allowed the Drs. \$10 a day for traveling to the camps. On Jan. 23, 1883, Dr. Belyea wrote the Health Board: *"Dr. Van Cleve returned from Caldwell's Camp, sixty miles north from here. 15 cases of small pox among whites and Indians, and 2 deaths. Sick quarantined and cared for as well as possible. It is impossible to prevent men that have been exposed from going down river. A pesthouse was established to keep exposed lumberjacks in. On 1/15 15 from Caldwell's Camp, one with variola, were taken to the pesthouse. Policemen to guard them were hired at \$2 a day. -"*

The Doctors who had battled the epidemic in the field were chastised by the Sec. of the State Board of Health for letting lumberjacks escape from the camps and spread the disease. One replied: *"Undergoing no little danger in traveling through pathless wilderness on snowshoes, and laying out at night in cold, bitter weather,"*----and concluded *"All this I did without the help of anyone whatever, except that given me by the Indians."*

Could those "Indians" he was referring to possibly have been Chief Busti and his squaw ?

EUSTI ARRESTED FOR MURDER !

LA PRAIRIE MAGNET, Published every Thursday at La Prairie, Minnesota, A. G. Bernard, Editor and Proprietor, in LOCAL column of the April 2, 1891 issue:

LA PRAIRIE MAGNET.

Published Every Thursday by
A. G. BERNARD, Editor and
Proprietor.

[Entered at the La Prairie Post Office, October
16th., 1890, as Second Class Mail Matter.]

Arrival and Departure of Mails.

Mail arrives 7:10 p. m., daily except Sunday.
Mail leaves 7 a. m. daily except Sunday.
Post office is open on Sunday from 9 to 10 a. m.

Arrival and Departure of trains.

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[Trains daily except Sunday.]

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Freight	8:45 " "	Freight	8:25 " "

LEAVES CLOQUET		ARRIVES AT CLOQUET	
Passenger	3:30 p. m.	Passenger	11:45 a. m.
Freight	12:01 " "	Freight	2:30 p. m.

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LOCAL.

The MAGNET has received several anonymous communications this week for publication. We want it distinctly understood that this paper can never be made the means of venting personal spite. A person is an arrant coward who would attempt to attack another without signing his name to an article.

Hans Jensen, who was taken to the hospital last week suffering from pneumonia, died with hemorrhage of the lungs Saturday morning. The unfortunate man had neglected himself too long and was beyond human assistance when he went to the hospital. His remains were taken to Otter Tail county for interment.

Last Friday night, Deputy United States Marshal Warren landed in the La Prairie jail. Bah-bah-mah-jebish-kung, a noted Chippeaw chief. This Indian is charged with the crime of murdering another Chippeaw on the Winnibigoshish reservation last fall. The authorities have been on the look out for Bah-bah for some time, but he was wily enough to keep shady. Last week Marshal Warren heard of his man and with two deputies, went to White Oak point, where he was arrested while eating his dinner. From here he was taken to the Duluth jail, where he will remain for trial. Bah-bah-jebish-kung is a somewhat noted Indian. In 1880 he went to Washington and while there, President Grant made him a present of an entire township of timbered land. He never liked the whites in his neighborhood, but beyond threatening them with violence, he never did them any injury. What led to the murder of young Valentine is not definitely known.

LA PRAIRIE MAGNET
April 9, 1891

LA PRAIRIE MAGNET
April 16, 1891

Bax-baumah-che-warsh-Rung, the Chippewa Chief, who has been on examination for the passed week before Judge Carey of Duluth, for the killing of Bah-Rin-ay-Keaig, in October last, was held upon the charge of murder. C. L. Lewis was attorney for the prisoner and United States District Atty. Hay prosecuted. The case is a peculiar one. The murder was committed in the midst of a crowd of Indians, at least three of whom swear positively that it was the defendant who did it. The latter however denies the charge and accuses the principal witness against him of being himself the guilty party. The case of the prosecution has one or two weak points. Its witnesses swear positively to the killing, but say the men had no previous quarrel and that they were not unfriendly. There is an entire absence of motive and neither by witnesses to the transaction nor any others can it show any reason for the crime. Then too its witnesses are all said to be related. This may be the reason why they tell so strong a story against the defendant and are so in accord with its principal accuser, he who is accused by the defendant.

The Chippewa Indian Chief with five hyphens in his name, will be tried for murder at the next term of the United States court, which sits at Winona in October

(The newspaper editor had a little trouble spelling Busti's official name, and was a little careless with his other facts.

Attempts to obtain records of the U. S. District Court in Winona pre-dating 1907 were fruitless. The "Winona Daily Herald", had, each week in the October through December, 1891 papers, a column entitled "In the Courts". No mention is made of Chief Busti, and we can only assume the Court dismissed the case for lack of evidence.)

W H I T E M E N

During the last part of the nineteenth century, cruisers, surveyors, loggers and squatters appeared more and more frequently along the Bigfork River Valley. Fur traders had no doubt been up and down the river for years. In 1854 John T. Knight, who would years later return to the Bigfork Valley homestead of his son Vic to live, traveled down the Bigfork with a companion. The waters all flowed North of course, and despite the terrific stands of Pine along the river there was no practical way to get it South to U. S. settlements. In the last 25 years of the 19th Century vast quantities of pine were logged and floated down the river, rafted up Lake of the Woods to Rat Portage where it was sawed, and shipped by rail to build the new City of Winnipeg. "Eighty five million feet a year was not an uncommon amount to be cut on American soil and driven down to Lake of the Woods and boomed across the Lake to Canadian mills --' (ON THE BANKS OF THE BIGFORK, Richard Anderson, 1956). These camps employed hordes of men cutting and skidding in the woods, and on log drives in the spring.

In the 1880s and 90's Surveying crews were busy in the area, cutting out Section lines and surveying with hand held compasses. They found a surprising number of squatters living on the land, especially in the area North of Deer Creek. In 1887 a jovial frenchman settled at the junction of the Bigfork and Rice Rivers. He later operated a "stopping place" and a little store. Busti soon became well acquainted with this man who became known to the early settlers as "Uncle Tom".

Busti deplored the vast timber cutting and waste of the forest left behind, but was friendly always with the lumbermen, often trading fish, rice, etc. for "cook shack goodies." Many early settlers settled along the river, and as the white man increased in the area, the Indian population decreased, most of them moving to the Lake Vermillion or Nett Lake area. Busti & Company remained.

He was a friend and helper to the homesteaders too.

FIRST PERMANENT SETTLERS

Chief Rusti
and
Gee uoo oo

INDIAN



"Uncle Tom" Nevaux

WHITE

AN ACT FOR THE RELIEF AND CIVILIZATION
of the
CHIPPEWA INDIANS IN MINNESOTA

The Congressional Act of January 14, 1889 (25 Stat. 642), "An Act for the Relief and Civilization of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota", was commonly known as the "Nelson Act." Introduced by Rep. Knute Nelson of Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District, it had the backing of Minnesota's Indian reformers, and lumbermen.

"This act granted for the government to negotiate with all the bands of tribes of Chippewa Indians in Minnesota for the complete cessions of all their title and interest to all the reservations of said Indians in the State of Minnesota, and the Deer Creek Chippewa Indians being members of the Bois Forte Band were parties to this act. It further appears that 3 allotments were made on the Deer Creek Reservation under authority of the 1899 Act, and the balance of the lands were ceded to the United States and became public land." (Letter from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U S Dept. of Interior, dated May 24, 1975.)

The law called for the President, within sixty days of the passage of this act, to appoint 3 commissioners, whose duty "it shall be, as soon as practicable after their appointment, to negotiate with all Chippewa Indians in Minnesota for the complete cession and relinquishment in writing of all their title and interest in and to all reservations in Minnesota, except the White Earth and Red Lake Reservations, such cession and relinquishment deemed legal if assented to by 2/3 of the male adults over 18 years of age of the band occupying or belonging to such reservations."

An amendment made to the bill provided that individual Indians need not move to White Earth, but might take allotments in their old reservations. This provision was agreed to without debate, and its logical effect was to nullify the concentration of Chippewas at White Earth the bill was striving for.

The bill provided that the land ceded would be surveyed, and pine timber stands designated. An actual cash value would be placed on every Pine forty, the pine not to be valued less than \$3 a thousand feet. Pine lands would be auctioned in

40 acre lots, not sold for less than the appraised value. Other than pine lands (agricultural) would be sold to homesteaders under the Homestead Act, each settler paying \$1.25 an acre for the land, and living on it for 5 years. All money from the sale of timber and lands, after deducting expenses, would be placed in the Treasury of the U.S. to the credit of all Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, with interest at 5% per annum, to be distributed according to a pre-set formula. The government, in effect, became the agent for the Indians in the sale of their lands. The agreement had to be assented to by 2/3 of the male Indians on each reservation over the age of 18. Oh yes, there was another provision - any fire killed or blackened timber was sold for 75¢ a thousand.

Henry Rice of Minnesota was appointed Commission Chairman, Bishop Martin Marty of North Dakota (Former Catholic Archbishop of that State), and J. B. Whiting of Wisconsin were named to the Commission by the President. They estimated the value of the pine timber alone to be between \$25 and \$50 million. The population of Chippewa in Minnesota in 1889 was 8304; if the pine would bring \$50 million, it would be worth over \$6000 to every Chippewa in the state, plus interest that would accrue. (This does not include the \$1.25 an acre for Homestead Lands that would also go into the fund.)

The bill passed in January, 1889. It was signed by the President, the Commissioners were appointed (at good salaries and expenses which were to be deducted from the Indians proceeds), and meetings with the various bands were held. The Bois Forte Chippewas met at the Government Warehouse at Lake Vermillion on Nov. 9, 1889. Chairman Rice did not attend, but Bishop Marty and Commissioner Whiting, along with several of their employees were there. The meeting was for all males over 18, not just for the Chiefs as it had been when treaties were made.

The council opened with an invocation of divine blessing by Bishop Marty, and the balance of the morning session was taken up with an explanation of the Act of Congress.

Questions about the act were answered in the afternoon.

On the morning of Nov. 10th, Bishop Marty held a divine service at 10 A.M. Afterward the Indians met to discuss the proposal amongst themselves. When Commissioner Whiting convened the council again that afternoon, Quay-cuh-cum-ig, a 56 year old Chief addressed the Indians: *"Shall we listen to the Commissioners? I think we should, because we are ignorant, and should not do anything against the interest of our bands. We must not listen to foolishness, but we ought to have our old men here, especially the Mountain Traveler. He is the one by whom I have been guided. I now speak to the Commission. I also implore the Master of Life to have pity on my words, as I am about to utter a few of my own thoughts. When He put us on this world He did not put on us any curse of poverty, or intend that one man should inflict cruelty on another.----Is it possible that you (addressing Bishop Marty) a great man and a Bishop would come here, in the fear of God, who I fear myself, and tell these things, if they were not true?"*

The next day at the conference, November 11th, Census-taker Dufauld announced that the messenger sent after Mountain Traveler (Chief Busti) had returned, and brought word that on account of the ice in the rivers it had been impossible to reach the Chief. (The ice was too thick to canoe in, too light to walk on.)

The transcript of the Nov. 12th meeting does not mention "Mountain Traveler" and surely would have if he had arrived. The Commissioners swore that this treaty would be honestly and fairly carried out, and the Chiefs first, and then the members of the respective bands "touched the pen", signifying their assent to the agreement. The names were listed, 211 legal age Bois Forte males. On the list is Bay baum wu chu waish kun, Chief, age 60 - BUSTICOCAN !

Was Busti illegally listed as present, and assenting? The record would make it appear so.

Although a move to White Earth was supposed to be a move to better farming land, the various bands elected to take their allotments on their own reservations, except for some

from Mille Lacs Lake who were encouraged to move to White Earth.

On July 27, 1897 4 allotment certificates were filed in the Itasca County Courthouse for Twp. 62, R. 25 (Deer Creek Reservation, now known as Bustitown). No. 1 was Bay cum wa che wasih ting (Chief Busti). Mrs. Busti was given an allotment also.

The commissioners and their helpers continued to draw their salaries. A crew of over 20 Pine estimators was appointed, and a cry was raised that the work they did was fraudulent, so a second corps was appointed, no more qualified than the first. All of these expenses being run up were of course, deducted from the proceeds of the pine sales. One observer noted that an additional clerk in the bureau of Indian Affairs could have done the work in a year - only 59 Indians were removed to White Earth one year.

A NEW CENTURY

At the turn of the century, Busti was 70 years old. He and Gee wee oo lived peaceably in their wigwam on the river. Often relatives and friends from Nett Lake came to stay with them, or visit. The river and the lake were less than 1/4th mile apart. There was a fairly flat area by the river, which had been cleared by the government for farming, the log house and wigwam sat back at the edge of the clearing by a trail that climbed some 40 ft. above the river, and down again to the lakeshore. Busti had a wigwam on the lake side of the ridge too. It was boggy by the shore there, so a little canal was dug so they could bring a canoe up to solid ground. The fine log house on the other side of the ridge they used for storage.

By now Busti was the Head Chief of the Bois Forte band. Indians from Nett Lake came often to confer with him, and they traveled there from time to time. Usually a group from there would come down in the spring to join them in making maple sugar up the river, and each spring some men from Nett Lake would come down and loosen the garden soil with homemade hoes, and plant corn and potatoes for Busti.

Highly respected by his own people, he was also well thought of by the loggers and surveyors who had been in the area.

Homesteaders began moving into the area up river by the junction of the Rice & Bigfork rivers. "Uncle Tom" Neveaux became a good friend, and traded supplies for furs with Busti. More homesteaders settled down river from Uncle Tom's in the very early 1900s, and in 1904 Bustitown, the former Deer Creek Indian Reservation that had been relinquished by the Nelson Act of 1889 at the Lake Vermillion conference, was opened to homesteading. Settlers moved into 'his' township as well as adjoining ones.

Busti and Gee wee oo still traveled a lot, but their life assumed more of a routine.

The winter was a time for trapping, and Busti was a good trapper. He gathered in a lot of pelts each season, but always left some animals for food.

MAPLE SUGAR TIME

When the first crow came back in the spring, it was time to go to the Maple Sugar Bush. Busti and Gee wee oo were usually joined by relatives from the Nett Lake area, and they snowshoed up the river many miles to their 'Sugarbush' between Bigfork and Dora Lake. They pulled toboggans with food and supplies, and Gee wee oo carried a pack "for better traction." The fall before they had taken two canoes when they went up the river to gather rice, and had left one there to bring Maple Sugar back in the spring. They had stored a solid copper kettle, some tin kettles, and a roll of birchbark for a tipi in a cache. (Bill Hafeman, who moved to the Bigfork River many years later, and who became quite famous around the area himself as a builder of birchbark canoes, told in a Feb. 1975 taped interview how he had stumbled on to the cache with the kettles in it, and showed us how black from smoke the inside of the birchbark rolls were.) They also left a cache of food there the fall before, but they brought along dried moose meat and dried fish to supplement the cedar bark bags of rice, cranberries sewed in birchbark "ma-kuks" and long strings of dried potatoes and dried blueberries.



Godfrey Knight Jr.
made a pair of snowshoes
in 1975, laced with raw-
hide, similar to those
Busti used to make.
They worked very well.

Once at the sugar maple woods, the caches were uncovered, tipis were erected and covered with the stored birchbark, and camp was set up.

It was one of the most festive and enjoyable times of the year. The winter was about past; as the spring sun warmed the maple tree trunks, the sap began to rise.

With single bit axes obtained from traders, the trees were tapped. Birch bark sap dishes were put out to catch the sap. Each family required several hundred sap dishes. Often the sap was not running when they arrived, and the men would cut a hole in the ice in the river, or on Dora Lake, cover themselves with hides, and spear fish thru the holes.

Sap buckets were made from birch bark too. They were cut and folded at the corners to avoid breaking the bark, and sealed with pine pitch. They were fitted with a handle, and made deep enough to hold a couple of gallons of sap. Racks were set up to hold the sap kettles for boiling, in a shelter constructed just for that. When the sap began running, the sap dishes were emptied into the buckets and carried to the boiling hut, to be boiled down into sugar in kettles and large tin cans they had obtained from logging camps. When the syrup began to granulate it was poured into a wooden trough and stirred as the granulating continued. Most years Busti and Gee wee oo would come back with 500 or 600# of maple sugar themselves, not counting what other members of the party would make.

When the ice went out, the men would set a net and catch fish, which were cleaned, split, and smoked over a slow fire.

Making sugar was very hard work, especially if there was still a lot of snow on the ground when the sap started. Nevertheless, they all agreed it was one of the best times of the year. Sometimes the party would stay in the sugar camp until May, when it was time to store away their tipi birchbark and utensils and canoe back downstream with their load of sugar.

SUMMER

They would no more get settled back home, before it was time to get the garden ready, and the potatoes and corn planted - about $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of each. In the summer, the garden was tended to - a little. By Gee we oo, of course. Summer was a time for visiting, for building canoes, for picking and preserving berries.

James Knight, whose father Vic Knight homesteaded a few miles up the river from Busti's in 1902, became a real friend of the old Chief, and visited him often. James said : "Old Busti stood straight as an arrow, Six foot two, about 225#, with broad shouldens. No beard, inon gray hair, right to his shouldens. He often wone a tall black hat with a single eagle feather.

Both of them wore mocassins, year around. His had high tops, wrapped around his leg and tied with thongs. The squaw wore two Hudson Bay blankets in winter around her waist. She did kind of a modified strip tease when peeling off blankets to rest. Busti usually wore cloth pants - with a sash or a piece of rope instead of a belt -, wool shirt. He had a rabbit skin robe made out of about 200 rabbit skins.

Their wigwam was 10, 12 feet in diameter. Covered with birch bark, roof about 8 ft high, smoke hole in center. They almost slept on the fire. Had one on the river side of the ridge and one on the lake. Laid birchbark like shingles. Mats on walls and floor. Didn't like it when it was real cold.

He made the nicest pattern of birch canoe that I've ever seen, and there wouldn't be one item that had known a white man's hand in there, in the whole thing."

Wm. Hafeman, who became quite famous as a birchbark canoe builder in the last half of the twentieth century, wondered how the Indians could find straight grained, knot free cedar. He went on to tell how he found tall cedars where the limbs had been cut off in a narrow vertical strip, and a few inch strip of bark peeled vertically off the tree. A straight grained, knot free bulge would grow over that stripped area. Hafeman tried the technique himself - it really worked.

"One odd thing, I can say I saw a man working there (at Busties) with a stone hoe. There were 3 or 4 Indians there grubbing a piece of ground to plant potatoes. They had a couple of hoes made of scrap iron from some camp, and one made from a piece of thin portion of a sharp rock, strapped on a wood handle. He was grubbing away with that." (James K. Knight in a taped interview.) He also told how they handled porcupine: "I was going down the river one evening and Busti was camped along the river. As I stepped ashore, the squaw came. She had a 'ponky' in a roll of birchbark under her arm. She singed the quills off perfectly clean with a birchbark fire, and that solved that - how they got the quills off. I ate a lot of meals at Bustis, but I never ate porcupine - not that I know of!"

Ricing was another big annual event. BIG. "Ma no min" was a staple food they had on hand all year long. Nett Lake produced tons of it every year, but often some of the Indians from there would come up and join with Busti and Gee wee oo harvesting on the upper Bigfork waters. They'd go up a little ahead of harvest time, and tie rice stalks together in little bunches. Then if a hard wind storm came along, these would stand. They tied about enough for a years supply.

Ricing is hard work, but also a fun time. As Busti pushed the canoe slowly through the rice field, Gee wee oo, with a stick in each hand, would bend the heads over the canoe with one stick, and knock the heads off with the other. Right side, left side, in a steady rhythm as the canoe eased through the rice bed. The heads fell into the canoe, and when the ricing was good they could literally get their canoe full in a couple of hours. The green rice then had to be parched. Gee wee oo had a big kettle she parched theirs in, stirring it with a little paddle to keep from burning. When it was parched and had cooled off, it was dumped into a hole in the ground lined with a tanned hide. Busti or one of the other men would get in the hole and tramp the hulls off with their bare feet. (Albert Reagan, Indian Agent at Nett Lake said it was reported the men sometimes washed their feet - "after they were done tramping".

Then the hulls, chaff and dust were winnowed off by the women, and the food that many white people now consider a delicacy was ready to store or cook. It was stored in birch bark or hide containers, and a great deal of it kept to use all year around, or to share. "Aborigines in Minnesota", an excellent book on early Minnesota Indians, stated, as have several other writers, that the Ojibways thought rice was a special luxury "when boiled with the excrements of the rabbit to 'season it'".

Rice camp was a place of very hard work. It was a place to celebrate when the harvest was in. Walter Smith, whose father built the big log 'stopping place' near Balsam Lake on the 'Bigfork trail', told one day some neighbors of theirs were on the upper Bigfork planning to hunt some ducks. They came by Busti's rice camp just after the harvest was in, and Busti insisted they join them in the celebration. They had a big feed, a "squaw dance", and a big time was had by all.

When they still had children at home, Busti and Gee wee oo would bring home 500# or 600# of processed rice; in later years they harvested less.

When the geese and the ducks began flying South in big flocks it was time to get the ^{Tulibee}/nets mended, and canoe up Deer Creek to Big Deer Lake where they would set up camp. Friends and relatives would often come down from the Nett Lake area and meet them there. The men would set nets for the fish, and lift them the following morning. They split the fish, spread them over a drying rack made of small green sticks. A slow fire would dry and smoke them, and they put up great quantities. They not only ate a lot of them over the winter themselves, but Busti would often give a sack of them to a logger, who often responded with a ham, etc. Whenever they canoed by Vic Knights, Mrs. Knight would give them bread when they left. Busti usually left fish or something in return.

As the prospects of colder weather approached, Gee wee oo would make new mats for the wigwams, and in late fall there were cranberries to be gathered and dried. Busti would ready his traps.

Busti caught a lot of beaver, fisher, muskrats, etc. when the fur was prime. Albert Reagan, Agent at Nett Lake in 1909, wrote in the "Wisconsin Archeologist": *"The region is a paradise for fowl and fur bearing animals. It is a hunter's haven. It is also a great fur region, the Indians selling thousands of dollars worth of skins annually.--- The principal animals of the region are caribou (now almost extinct), moose, red deer, skunk, white weasel, mink, otter, woodchuck, pine squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, muskrat, gray wolf, coyote, fox, beaver, marten, wild cat, mountain lion, rabbit and bear. The principal fish are perch, pickerel, black and rock bass and suckers."* (MOUNTAIN LION ?)

After a store was established in Bigfork, Busti took furs there to trade for supplies. Unfortunately for him, there were saloons there almost as soon as there were stores, and Busti always came home without any money regardless of how many furs he brought in, or how few supplies he bought. After he came to know Vic Knight well, he sold his furs to him, always wanting 'hard money' in payment. He would then take half the money with him to Bigfork, get his supplies, and pick up the other half of his money on the way home. He said he always was able to get just as much with half the money as he was with all of it.

Deer were not as plentiful as they are now, but Busti needed deer ears to hang around his campsite to please "kitchi manitou", so he headlited with a candle with a birch innerbark reflector, in shallow water around Busti lake. The meat of course they ate, drying every bit that wasn't consumed fresh.

Without a watch or compass, Busti could tell the time and seasons from the sun and stars. He couldn't get used to the foolish schedules white people kept. The time to eat wasn't necessarily 6 o'clock at night - the time to eat was when he was hungry, the time to sleep was when he was tired. He didn't get perturbed over a storm. Good weather usually follows bad.

When they traveled on the river, Gee wee oo always paddled from the back of the canoe, Busti from the front with his gun close at hand. If they spotted a moose in the water when they



DOWN THE BIGFORK

rounded a bend, they would drift (if they were going downstream), or sneak paddle as close as they could and Busti would shoot it. They would drag it on shore and dress it out, and then prepare to make camp right there. They carried rolls of birchbark for a tipi with them in the canoe, so all they had to do was cut some tipi poles and in an hour they had their camp set up. After a good feed on fresh moose meat, Busti would make a drying rack while Gee wee oo gathered dry wood. Then they'd skin out the animal, scrape all the meat off the hide, and cut the meat in thin strips, which they dried over a slow, smoky fire. It would get "hard as leather". They would stay right there in that spot as long as it took to dry all of the meat - every speck of it. It would keep practically forever that way, and as one homesteader put it "*It was pnetty dann good too, especially if it was boiled up with some wild rice.*"

They ate everything they shot or trapped - beaver, fisher, muskrat, deer, caribou, moose, skunk, porcupine - everything. They raised corn and potatoes, had loads of wild rice and maple sugar. (They seasoned everything with maple sugar - they used no salt.) The stories you read of Indians not having more than a days supply of food on hand at a time did not apply to Busti. They associated with white people, but they knew how to live off the land, and they did, in the most part. They cooked acorns, dug roots, and even picked and stored thorns for use in pinning garments, etc. And anything they had they would share with someone in need. They did buy tea, flour and a few food items from the store.

A.D. Moors, a colorful old friend of everyone, came to Bigfork in 1906. Although a young fellow, he got a job in Bjorge & Lindem's store. He recalled in a 1974 taped interview waiting on Chief Busti & Gee wee oo.

It's too bad it is impossible to convey on paper the way A.D. emphasized his words:

"Yes sir, I sold groceries to Chief Busticogan. I was working for Bjonge & Lindem. He and his squaw came into the Bigfork Mercantile Store, and I waited on them. She took off a blanket and threw it down in the middle of the floor and sat down by the blanket. He walked, all over the store. He'd pick this up and that up - come and paid me for it, and put it on the blanket. And go and look some more. He could speak a little English, not too much though. And when he got through, why, he had paid me, he'd walk right out the door. The squaw would pick up the blanket and go out after him. He didn't carry a thing. Nuthin'.

He was a funny old fellow, he always wore moccasins, never saw him with shoes. When he walked, he walked springy, like this. He probably weighed over 200#, anyway. He was a big man. And I seen with all the, - the moccasins, the pants, the jacket, and the feathers. I seen him with the whole works one time. Oh, boy, he really was something. All deerskin outfit, brand new. And when he came, he had brand new canoes, too. Oh, yah, no old busted up things, he had good ones. And people still think that he had a pile of money someplace, someplace along the river.

I think maybe he had some money, but you know, the government.

I don't know if the government is all crooked, or what, but there is some awful people in the government, do you know that?

He was a funny old bird. He was in Washington when he died. Blew out - in a hotel - blew out the gas light. He was a well respected man. Very few people had the respect old Busti had.

Well, I still think he had some money hid away somewhere. Unless some clown stole it.

Busti. He was a funny old geezer. I said to Bjonge one time, 'he wants some of them pickles in the 'barrl.' I said, 'How am I going to put up them pickles?' You know, they had them in a 'barrl'. Bjonge went over there with those two big hands of his, and just reached down like that and got a whole fistful, and throwed them in the blanket! Oh, that Bjonge was

an awful creature, oh boy. You know he didn't have nuthin' to put the pickles in, but that's just something Bjonge would do, you know".

Busti was a friend to all the homesteaders. The "Bigfork Settler ", T. M. Saunders and Company, Editor, in the "Local Items" column of the Thursday Oct. 8, 1908 issue, reported: "Mr. Busti and his wife, our down river Indian neighbors, were shaking hands with friends in town this morning."

A. D. Moors reported, in that same tapping, the story that has long circulated about Busti killing his son, who was beating his squaw in a drunken rage. Frans Logdahl, in the 1935 WPA history project, said : *" I was talking a couple of years ago to a couple of old-timers in this country who knew Chief Busticogan well. They told us that Chief Busti once killed one of his own sons. It seems that this son had done something for which the Indian penalty was death. Because he was Chief Busti's son, the tribe would not execute him. So old Busticogan, to uphold the tribal law and tradition, killed his own son with his own hand."*

A. D. told it a little differently :

"To show you what the government thought of him, he killed his own son right up between here (Bigfork) and Wint, Flat Rock Rapids. Shot him right here in the middle with a shotgun. The son came in drunk and was beating up his squaw. Old Busti killed him, blew him right in two, and they never even asked him a question. And that's what they thought of old Busti. He was BOSS, of the Indians."

At Busti's home wigwam site, James Knight told of cedar bark burial boxes above ground about 20' from the wigwam. One body had long hair you could see, with Canadian coin ear rings. Busti hung deer ears as an offering to 'kitchi manitou'".

Robert Stitts of Brainerd was a big logger in the Big Deer, Pickeral, Battle Lake country in the early 1900s. His daughter, Ella Stitt Graham wrote a biographic sketch of her Dad for the Minnesota Historical Society some years ago. Stitts' headquarters camp was on a creek joining Tank and Battle Lakes, and the clearing that remains is still locally known as "Stitts' Ranch".



Ella Stitt
Chief Busti
Arthur Stitt

1909

She reported that Busti would go to Deer Lake in the winter and send word to Stitts he could use some tea and pork. Busti would always give Stitts fish in return. She went on : "The next day, the 16th of January, my father and I, the housekeeper and her boy, packed a box of food, a ham, a slab of bacon, canned blueberries, -- tea, several loaves of bread -- a lot of smoking tobacco for him, and I took Mrs. Busti a full plug of tobacco, which made her eyes gleam, while we had to explain what canned blueberries were. My father could speak Chippewa so he and Busti got on famously. --

At this time I remember distinctly my father telling me Busti was 74 years old. (Editor's note: If so, that would make it January 16, 1904.)

The thing my father was calling to our attention was, that even though they really were rich, it meant nothing to them. They were so very happy together and were happy in their simple teepee with the blanket doon and squaw wood for heat and cooking."

She told of visiting them again in the winter of 1908, on a day so bitterly cold her father ran along side the sleigh, and "we wrapped our faces in the cotton lunch cloth. We arrived, and found 13 Indians, including Busti, in a teepee 13 feet in diameter. Seven adults and six children. One mother was only 17 and she had a pair of twins and an infant. The squaws sat around the fire, had on cotton clothing, and each one had only a strip of buckskin to protect her breasts from the cold.

A year or two after this visit we were on the point between Battle and Pickeral Lakes, and we found six graves in the woods. They were marked with pieces of cotton kept in place with a small stick in each corner."

They learned sometime later that all the children had died of diptheria.

Vic Knight, up river from Busti's on the Bigfork River, was a favorite stopping place for Busti and Gee wee oo. Vic could speak some Chippewa, and his two boys, James and Godfrey, became real pals of the old chief. When going past Knight's whether it would be day or night, Busti and his squaw would stop, and would just walk in the house. One time, Vic's Dad, John T. Knight, who had traveled down the Bigfork some fifty years before, had a bad case of dysentery, and the medicines they had were of no help. Gee wee oo went out in the woods, gathered some herbs. She boiled a tea out of them, gave it to old John, and - it worked!

Before tobacco was obtainable in Bigfork, they smoked "kinnikinnik", made from the bark of the Dogwood brush. Gee wee oo smoked a small stone pipe, Busti a big engraved one. Both had cranberry bush stems. They always carried a buckskin pouch of kinnikinnik or tobacco with them. Bois Forte Indians, reportedly, especially liked their smokes.

James Knight spoke fondly of Busti. *"Busti's philosophy was to live a rich life, enjoy nature. He believed there was plenty of everything for everyone. He didn't object to the white man - but he sure did object to his wasteful ways. Hated to see all the timber cut -- big trees cut down, two logs taken and the rest left to rot. He worried what the country would amount to if they kept cutting the timber off and destroying the game --- the slashing and the burning. Streams will get small, he said."*

James said his Dad, Vic, had one of the first phonographs, one with a big "Morning glory" horn. *"That's one thing that puzzled that man, and he was too dignified to give into it for a long while. The first time he listened to it he wouldn't turn around. Squaw finally got punching him to look at it. We showed him the wax cylinders, but he wanted to see inside."*

"That guy had something in his head, exceptional, I tell you", James said. "The way he governed Nett Lake even though he lived over here. They came over often to consult him. Real often, and he went there sometimes. Very intelligent. The best neighbor a person could have."



MALLARD IN WILD RICE

UNCLE TOM'S TOOTHACHE

We have limited information in this booklet to historical sources, and from those "old-timers" who knew Busticogan personally. Agnes Rajala, daughter and grand-daughter of some of the Bigfork Valley's very earliest settlers has a story, while not first-hand, that is to good to pass up.

It so happened that Uncle Tom (Tom Neveau, Bigfork's first white settler) had a toothache. He'd had it for some time, but the closest dentist was in Grand Rapids, so he'd not done anything about it. Nevertheless it bothered him, as such things will. So, when Busticogan was making one of his visits, Uncle Tom chanced to mention it to him.

Whether or not Busticogan volunteered his services, I'll never know. But somehow, it was decided that the thing to do was pull the tooth, and the person to do it was Busticogan - and the time was right now.

Uncle Tom was agreeable to the idea, but he thought he'd like to feel a little braver first. He had plenty of anesthetic that he had manufactured himself, so he began imbibing liberally to get up his courage. Busticogan thought he'd like to be brave, too, so he also had several helpings of Uncle Tom's special recipe, until they both felt that the time had come. I'm assuming that an audience had gathered - my father (a lifelong teetotaler) was present, and probably others, who may have been urging them to get on with it.

So Uncle Tom got into a kitchen chair, and braced himself, and Busti armed himself with the pliers. Uncle Tom opened his mouth and with his pudgy fingers indicated which was the offending tooth. Busticogan (more than a little bleeny-eyed by this time), peered into the dark hole of mouth surrounded by bushy whiskers, and nodded sagely, braced himself in his turn, and reached in, grabbed the tooth, and began to pull.

Midway in the operation Uncle Tom appeared to have a change of heart. He erupted from his chair, and grabbed Busti's hands, with yelps of agony. But Busti for some reason wasn't

ready to quit. So the onlookers were treated to the spectacle of a rotund Uncle Tom and big rawboned Busticogan dancing around the kitchen, Uncle Tom howling and Busti exhorting, hooked together by the pliers Busti had clamped around Uncle Tom's tooth. (My father laughed till he cried at this point.)

It was a draw. Busticogan had the tooth halfway out when Uncle Tom got free - but there he was with the tooth hanging loose. He didn't dare close his mouth for fear of the pain, and he moaned like a moose in labor (Papa said). Busticogan signified his willingness to complete the job, but Uncle Tom would have none of his ministrations. So they had to haul him to Jesse Junction and take him on the train to Deer River, mouth open and moaning all the way, and lead him to a real dentist in Grand Rapids.

I'm happy to say that Uncle Tom's shocking lack of confidence in his friend's medical skills didn't seem to damage their friendship.

PROBLEMS

When Busti and his gang were finished making maple syrup one spring, they had to wait a long while for a log drive to go down river before they could canoe back with their sugar. Deer Creek was filled with logs much of the summer. Loggers were setting fires to kill some trees so they could buy the stumpage as "dead and down" for a fraction of its actual worth. Often the fires got away, destroying huge tracts. Homesteads were taken in his own township. He liked the homesteaders and was a help to them in many ways, but hadn't it been granted by the Great White Father to his people "perpetually" just a few years before, or as Busti put it, "as long as the river shall run." ? The big money promised his people at the Lake Vermillion council in 1889 - the council where he was listed as present and assenting to the proposal when he wasn't even there - was in much smaller payments than the Commissioners had promised.

For years the Chippewas, (not only Busti), had been dissatisfied with the operation of the government employees in the execution of the Treaty of 1889. The book, "Aborigines in Minnesota", states; *"It was very evident that gross fraud was perpetrated against them."* The Battle of Sugar Point on Leech Lake, called the last battle between the Indians and Whites in America was partially caused by the unrest of the Chippewa there. Folwell, in his "History of Minnesota," Volume IV, states that *"The operations of the Nelson Act of 1889 had been disappointing ---and, after eight years, they were in an ugly mood generally"*. Major Wilkinson and several troopers from Ft. Snelling were killed. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs came to the area after the battle and met with the Chippewas. They said they regretted the death of those brave men, but that they had risen against injury and oppression just as white men would have done. Mrs. Ollie Mills, in a 1935 WPA Historical interview, said:

"I remember the 1898 Indian uprising. My husband was working at Winnibigoshish Dam. The children and I were alone.--- They had a Gatling gun at the dam. The young soldiers at Deer River swelled up so big my husband said 'God's overcoat would not make them a vest.' Someone in Deer River got old Capt. John Smith to

give a Chippewa warhoop. The young soldiers ran over women and everyone trying to find shelter."

The Rev. J. A. Gilfillan, a respected missionary to the Indians, testified at length before the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives, on Feb. 2, 1899. He stated that he had lived with the Ojibways for 25 years, had traveled extensively among them, knew them, spoke their language.

"Let me say that I have always considered those Chippewas the most harmless people I have ever known. There has been no instance of any white person having been robbed, or stolen from, or molested in any way in the last 25 years. I have always considered my person and property much safer among them than among whites anywhere." "To go back to the origin of these troubles---we may recall that in 1889 a Commission of Three made a Treaty with them to cede most of their pine lands. By the terms of that treaty, roughly stated, the pine on the lands ceded, after being estimated, was to be sold for their benefit.---The Indians were very adverse to making a treaty. They feared that in some way they would in the end be deceived again and cheated, and it required great persuasion to induce them to sign. In order to make all as secure as they could, they brought in a Bible and had the Commissioners repeatedly swear, both by kissing the book and with uplifted hand, that the treaty would be honestly and fairly carried out. As one of the Commissioners was a Roman Catholic Bishop they thought his oath would be kept."

He went on to point out that the pine ceded was the last remaining great body of pine in the Northwest; that Commissioner Henry Rice told them it was worth from 25 to 50 million dollars exclusive of the pine at White Earth. Gilfillan charged the commission with collecting exorbitant wages and fees, still in existence ten years later. He said "an additional clerk at \$1000 a year in the Indian Agency could have done everything they had done." Gilfillan agreed with the Indians who complained the Commissioners were robbing them with their expenses. He said some of the employees of the Commission were most demoralizing and "their influence the very worst". He then went on to describe

the pine estimators. After the first corps had drawn wages and expenses for over two years, it was found the estimations were done fraudulently. A second corps of 27 were hired to do over what the first corps had done, all paid out of Indian funds of course. The second corps continued until 1897, when the same cry of fraud was raised about them. These two corps of appraisers were paid, out of Indian funds, 60 times the real value of the work, according to a responsible government representative. The work had not been done honestly, but in the interest of the purchasers. A Special Inspector was sent out, and found that most of the tracts he checked were estimated at about one-half their actual stumpage value.

Gilfillan went on to report the drunken conduct of the estimators, and then went on to describe a greater fraud - setting of fires so the pine could be bought as "dead and down" for 75¢ a thousand. Gilfillan charged the end result was the Indians were getting about 10% of the value of their pine timber. He concluded his testimony with a plea for change:

"by all the methods hereinabove spoken of, I think, and have long thought, that the Chippewas are going to be robbed of everything they possess if not stopped."

The House did enact legislation abolishing the Commission of 1889, and made some improvements in the timber sales area.

* * * * *

Busti was grieved by what he saw happening to his beloved North Country. The waste of the loggers. The fires, and their destruction, the crowded streams. And the little return to the Indians who surrendered their lands. In the winter of 1909 and 1910 he concluded that further pleading with local Indian agts. was futile. He must go back to Washington, and talk face to face with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, representing the Great White Father.

* * * * *



BUSTI DIES

Efforts to get some other Chiefs to accompany him fell through, so Busti with an interpreter set out again for the nation's capitol. He was getting old, his hair had turned white like the weasels, he had seen many winters. He must speak up again for his people, before he went to the "Happy Hunting Ground".

So, once again Busti boarded a train for the nation's capitol.

On the evening of March 9, 1910, Busti blew out the gas light in his hotel room, and was found asphyxiated there in the morning.

"Aboriginies Of Minnesota", by Hill, Lewis, Brower and Winchell, was published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1911. It is highly regarded as an authentic book on Minnesota Indians.

It tells of Busti's death, and reports that Bay-baum-ah-che-waish-kung, 'Who Travels on the Mountain', the Head Chief of the Bois Forte, was a good and influential man. He was commonly called 'Bus-ko-kog-an.'

By special grant from the U. S. Government, his body was transported to Nett Lake for burial. He was a pagan, but a Methodist Clergyman. Rev. Piquette, officiated at the burial. His widow spoke to him through the glass of the coffin:

"I told you not to touch that thing (whiskey) which has killed so many of our people. Had you paid attention to my warning you would not be where now you are."

* * * * *

BUSTICOGAN

"A GOOD AND INFLUENTIAL MAN"

* * * * *

EPILOGUE

Did Chief Busti really leave a treasure behind ?

HE MOST CERTAINLY DID !

Did he really have his hands on a substantial amount of money ? Was he, as Bob Stitt described him to his daughter, really rich ?

He had a lot of opportunities to accumulate money.

1. He collected annuities, albeit they were small.
2. He was an excellent trapper, and sold many furs.
3. He spent little cash, living basically off the land.
4. At the Treaty of 1866 in Washington, the Chiefs were awarded \$10,000 for expenses to and in Washington, and \$30,000 for "gifts for their people." There were only 5 Bois Forte Chiefs and 4 Headmen in Washington. IF that money was split equally among all nine, they would have had \$3333 each. (Busti was the second ranking chief, and they probably got a larger share.) If Busti had hung on to only a thousand dollars of that money, in pre-1866 coin - some of which could have been gold coin - think what it would be worth today.
5. The Bois Fortes sold some of their pine stumpage to timber companies before the Nelson Act of 1889 made the government their agent. Busti could certainly have had some of that money.
6. Early settlers report that when they had any monetary dealings with Busti, he would leave them at the wigwam and be gone quite awhile before he came back with money.
7. After Busti's death, his widow and a party from Nett lake came back and spent several days looking, but apparently found nothing.

Busti was gone, but did he leave a treasure behind ?

HE MOST CERTAINLY DID.

I haven't been able to find his cache of coins, but maybe someday you, or some lucky person will hear their metal detector 'go crazy', and uncover a hoard of old, but little worn coins that would be worth a small fortune.

And maybe no one ever will.

But he did leave a treasure, that is for sure, a legacy of helpfulness, of friendliness, of honesty, of integrity; of sharing whatever he had with those who had need; of caring for the land and lakes and streams, the birds and animals, plants and trees; of great appreciation for the area he called "home".

May those of us who follow treasure the legacy he left us, and may we remember to share a little of his spirit with "those we meet along the trail".