

The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Algoma

SYNOD OFFICE

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SECRETARY-TREASURER

SAULT STE. MARIE,
ONTARIO

BUHKWUJJENENE

A Chief of the Ojibways

Buhkwujjenene ("Wild man") was the son of Shingwaukoons ("Little Pine"), a Chief of the Ojibway tribe who in the early days of the nineteenth century lived at Sault Ste. Marie, which was known to the Indians as Pawating and was a sacred gathering place of the tribe from time immemorial.

Shingwaukoons was in his younger days a notable warrior, and in the War of 1812 had led his braves against the "Long-knives" (Americans) in several engagements; and later wore with pride the medal presented to him on behalf of his Great White Father the King. Shingwaukoons died at Garden River in 1856.

When Buhkwujjenene was little more than a lad he attracted the notice of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the Indian Agent at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, whose writings on Indian lore were the inspiration of Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha". Schoolcraft from time to time took Buhkwujjenene on various journeys, and on one occasion they were together for a year and a half on an expedition to the Mississippi.

Buhkwujjenene when a young man was the first convert to be baptized by the Rev. William McMurray, the pioneer Anglican missionary at Sault Ste. Marie, who records that the baptism took place on the 6th October 1833. He remained throughout his life a sincere Christian believer.

When the Indians removed from Sault Ste. Marie and settled at Garden River, a few miles to the east, he was a recognized leader in the counsels of the band, and afterwards became Chief. He was always concerned for the spiritual welfare of his people. In the absence of the missionary it was his custom to gather the Indians together in his cabin, and read the service of the Church and lead them in prayers.

Buhkwujjenene was one of the signatories to the Robinson Treaty of 1850, by which the Indians ceded to the Crown the territories north of Lake Huron, with the exception of their Reserves.

When the Prince of Wales visited Canada in 1860, Buhkwujjenene was among the Indian Chiefs presented to His Royal

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Highness, and he received a medal in commemoration of the occasion.

Buhkwujjened and his brother Augustin Shingwauk were very anxious that a "teaching wigwam" should be built, where the children of the red men could be educated. Shingwauk travelled with the Rev. E. F. Wilson through Ontario to collect funds for this project.

The following year Buhkwujjenene accompanied Mr. Wilson to England in the same cause. Wherever he went he aroused much interest, and created a very favourable impression. He addressed many meetings in various parts of England, Mr. Wilson interpreting, and was as much at ease as if addressing a Council of his own people. On one occasion he had the honour of being again presented to the Prince of Wales. On his introduction His Royal Highness greeted the Chief most pleasantly and cordially, examined his medal, and said he remembered him as being among the Chiefs he had met in Canada some years before. The Chief was also received with great kindness by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"I shall always love the English", Buhkwujjenene used to say afterwards, "they were so good to me". But when asked if he would like to live in England he said, "No, I would rather be with my own people at Garden River. There are fish in the river, game in the bush, lots of wood for fuel, land to make a garden, hay for the cattle, berries on the rocks and sugar in the maple tree - all free".

The "teaching wigwam" desired by Shingwauk and Buhkwujjenene was built at Garden River, but destroyed by fire a few days afterwards. It was rebuilt at Sault Ste. Marie and named "The Shingwauk Home", and to-day a fine building erected by the Dominion Government and known as "The Shingwauk Indian Residential School" carries on the work for which the two Indian Chiefs prayed and laboured.

Buhkwujjenene died at Garden River in 1900, aged about eighty-five.

It had been the Chief's desire to place a stained glass window in St. John's Church, Garden River, in memory of his father, Chief Shingwaukoons, but he died without being able to do so. Afterwards the window was given by Miss Longfellow, a daughter of the poet, who was greatly interested in the Chief and his connection with her father through Schoolcraft. The window shows the figure of an angel, and underneath are three inscriptions in the

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Ojibway language, the central one being a verse which appeals strongly to those who know God under the name of Kesha-Muhnedoo, "The Great Spirit", - "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Note.

There is no standard spelling of Ojibway names. The name of the subject of the foregoing sketch is spelled in various ways. BAHQWUDGEININE, in Mr. McMurray's register of baptisms. PAQWATCHININI, on the Robinson Treaty. PUHGWUDGENENE, in "Memoir of the Rev. James Chance" (also PUHGWUTCHENENE on the same page!) BUHKWUJJENENE, in Rev. E. F. Wilson's "Missionary Work among the Ojebway Indians". PEQUETCHENENE, in a Surrender of Land to the Crown for the erection of a church at Garden River. BEJUOGIANINI, in the title of Forster's portrait of the Chief in the Royal Ontario Museum.

Bibliography

- Fifth Annual Report of the Society for Converting and Civilizing the Indians, containing record of baptism. (Ontario Archives).
- Memoir of Rev. James Chance. Privately printed. London, Ont., 1898.
- Missionary Work among the Ojebway Indians, by the Rev. E. F. Wilson. S. P. C. K., London, 1886.
- Sketches of Indian Life, by the Rev. Canon Frost. William Briggs, Toronto, 1904.
- Algoma Missionary News, 2nd April 1900.
(There may be references in Schoolcraft's books of travel, but I have not had access to these).

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