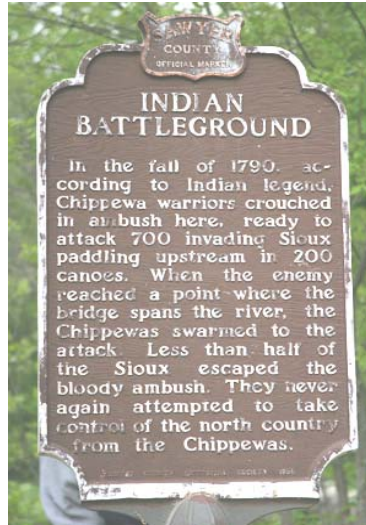


## Appendix A

### Local Lore

#### Battle of the Horsefly



There are stories that I keep coming back to, the Battle of the Horsefly is one such story and for me it is time to do it justice. I was actually aware of the Battle from the historical marker at the Moose Lake Bridge over the East Fork of the Chippewa off County Road S – near the resort community of Moose Lake (NE Sawyer County).

It explained how the Chippewa and the Sioux fought the last battle in the area at this site. Then over the next 20 years I heard bits and pieces of the story. The other day I was again asked about this piece of history and as I pulled out my notes and letters on the subject I realized I have never really told the story as I have come to understand it, nor have I explained how to look at the battle site from a warrior's point of view in mind to the relate the story.

The Battle of the Horsefly is a name I have come to call it as the horsefly sounded the warning. I believe it is also the way it was referred to in the past. Eldon Marple called it the Battle of Teal River in one of his writings... As with many things, an object, a person, a piece of history can have many names, yet still be just what it is.

In the time when Great Michel (Michael Cadotte) was the lead trader in the region and in the decade before Jean Baptiste Corbine had joined the company and came to the Lac Courte Oreilles area, there were hostilities on this land. The ebb and flows of

societies were in full flow across the land. The great battles with the Fox Nation were over. The Chippewa (Ojibwe/Anishinabe) in the form of numbers bands and their unique clan mixes moved further in the Rice District. By the onset those disturbed times between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 (Tecumseh's Uprising), the Chippewa had already forced the Dakota Sioux (Mdewakotan) to the South and West. By this time there was only one band of the Dakota left with in the borders of Wisconsin (The Dead Lake Band) most had removed to the other side of the St. Croix/Mississippi.

There was season to war it. It ran from after the sugar bush to the freeze over. War during the rest of the year meant certain starvation. Winters were survived while wars and battles were merely fought. By this time the traders were moving among the bands of Chippewa, Dakota, Menominee, Winnebago and Potawatomi and they promoted peace (by having peace ceremonies so the men could trap and hunt, thereby insuring that there would be pelts to make money off of in the spring.). In the late autumn there were elaborate ceremonies burying hatchets and smoke the individual peace pipes.

The battles were often revenge for past events, they also involved visions and elaborate ceremonies all within cultural and historic context. What the exact reasons that lead to the Mdewakotan attack on Old Post in about 1795 has been lost to time. What remains are the warrior stories, passed down from generation to generation through the old Chief Dance or War Dance... This is how I have learned to tell the story.

In a time of 'Peaceful Watching,' when there was a lull in the near continuous fighting between the Anishinabe and Mdewakotan. There was an old man, a leader, a medicine man if you will, who resided at Old Post {Pukwaywong} (numerous spellings). Old Post was on the West Fork of the Chippewa River, about 5 miles above the confluence of the East and West Fork and is today under the Chippewa Flowage. The rivers where the 'Roads Of War' especially the Chippewa River. Forty years later Henry Rowe Schoolcraft would write about the rivers of this area, 'Every bend in the river is a battle site'. Old Post had been attacked before and had been an area of considerable contention because of the extensive wild rice beds that were so treasure and so permanently lost when the area was flooded in the 1920.

Early one evening the 'Old Man' was watching the end of the day and smoking his pipe, when two horseflies came to him. They landed on his pipe and told him that the Mdewakotan were in the area. The Anishinabe were not horse people, the Mdewakotan, like the other Dakota, Nakota and Lakota were.

The Old Man called the warriors together and sent some down river to check the lower Chippewa and the East Fork, some up the Chief Rivers and others up the West Fork. Those that had checked the East Fork, the lower Chippewa and the Chief Rivers came back without finding a sign of the enemy. However a runner returned from the group that went up the West Fork to inform the community that the Mdewakotan were

bivouacked on the Teal River about a mile above the confluence of the Moose and West Fork Rivers, and were building canoes and preparing to attack. The rest of the scouting party had stayed and prepared an ambush below the confluence of the Teal and West Fork..

The political structure of the Anishinabe was different back then. There were Peace Chiefs and War Chiefs. At this point the War Chiefs took over. They planned and executed both the defensive and offensive aspects of the battle. They went from a reactive outlook to a proactive outlook.

First they gathered all the women, children and old folks and had them hide in a gully, which was covered with brush, and all signs of their movement to that gully were erased away. They then sent out a war party to counter the approaching Mdewakotan. Older men stayed and protected the women and children, as was the custom.

In the area around where the historical marker is up by Moose Lake Road and County S, the Anishinabe warriors dug foxholes and waited for the Mdewakotan to come down river by canoe. If you know the area there are a number of good spots to be able to shoot directly down at the river. The Anishinabe had a few muskets, but a majority of the weapons were the bow and arrows, and of course the war clubs.

The warriors then prepared themselves to die and put their hair up in a scalp lock to show they were ready to die. They wore their hair as long as it would grow. They first took up three small wisps of hair at the crown of the head and braided them, firmly braided about midway the length of the hair, after which they then wrapped this braid with moosewood, basswood or other strong bark so that the braid would stand erect on the head from about six to eight inches (if they had red flannel they would use that instead of the bark because it was showier). Then the hair above the braid was allowed to fall over, giving the lock a parasol appearance. A genuine warrior thought as much of his scalp lock as he did of his war club and desired to make it look as conspicuous as possible.

The ambush was set and after a time, the Mdewakotan canoed down river. It opened with a volley from the few muskets that the Anishinabe had and was immediately followed with bow and arrows, and finally was reduced to war club and scalping knife, as the battle moved from the river bank into the river. Eventually the battle ended in hand-to-hand combat. With many stories like this one, they say the river ran red with blood.

Many Anishinabe warriors were killed in this battle and according to oral legend all but one of the Mdewakotan warriors were killed. The number of dead is now only a guess, but there were many more dead on the Mdewakotan side. They buried the dead near the Battle Site to the west of the river in two close but separate burial areas, one for the

Mdewakotan and one for the Anishinabe. Years later a settler, planted trees over the site so no one would ever farm the warrior's graves.

What became of the sole Mdewakotan survivor? The people of Pukwaywong, put the best of clothing on him, they filled a canoe with rice, meat and the best of what they had. They put the last Mdewakotan warrior in this canoe and told him to go home, with this gift and to never attack this area again. The Dakota never sent another war party into the Valley of the Chiefs or into the LCO area again. And the legend of the Battle of the Horsefly lives on with this telling.

**SOURCES:** (text) William W. Warren's '*History of the Ojibways, based upon Traditions and Oral Statements*,' Benjamin G. Armstrong's '*Early Life Among the Indians*,' and Walker D. Wyman's "*The Chippewa - A History of the Great Lakes Indian Tribe Over Three Centuries*." (oral) Jerry Smith (who's grandfather Henry Smith heard it from his own grandfather at Old Post) recorded March 9, 2001 at his home in the tribal community of '6 Mile', (the remainder were told me prior to this date in social settings by:) George O'shogay, Charles Quagon, Donald W. Corbine, Ray Wolf and Ernest 'Peasoup' Guibord. Such oral histories are the generational telling of a story that is now more than 200 years old. This is recorded to honor both the story and the cultural nature of its telling.

**by Thelma Nayquonabe**

*News From Indian Country 7-07*

“Skabewis, that’s my name... I was given this name by Pipe Mustache. Sometimes I am called Oshkaabewis.”



***Moose Lake,  
Wisconsin - The Lac  
Courte Oreilles Ojibwe  
Veterans Staff with  
Eagle feathers was  
stood up next to the  
rock that marks the  
area where warriors  
from the  
Ojibwe/Dakota battle  
were buried.***

Photos by Thelma  
Nayquonabe

In the Ojibwe Dictionary, the word Oshkaabewis means ceremonial attendant, ceremonial messenger. Paul DeMain lives up to this name, always carrying information and messages to the people.

Paul is the managing editor and CEO of *News From Indian Country*. He is also a father, grandfather, husband, and as his spirit name dictates, he is a ceremonial messenger for the Lac Courte Oreilles people. Energetic, inquisitive, and confident in his demeanor, Paul has built a solid communication base for vital and current Indian policy issues through his work as editor and co-owner of *News From Indian Country* newspaper.

Each day finds Paul leaning back on a chair in one of his many offices, talking on the telephone to a Native news reporter, or walking across the street to the restaurant for coffee, or working late into the night to meet a deadline for the paper.

Paul’s namesake (owiyowenh’enhyan), James “Pipe” Mustache, was a ceremonial leader of the Ojibwe people of Wisconsin. Pipe became Paul’s mentor over the years, and they traveled together and Paul recalls hearing many historic and religious accounts of Ojibwe tradition.

This is the story that Pipe told many times, of a historic battle between the Ojibwe and Dakota which had occurred hundreds of years before, and Paul's search for this historic location.

Paul spent over six years searching for this location, after hearing the story of the historic and tragic battle from his namesake Pipe.

"Pipe talked about a very large battle that took place. Now that I know what's going on around me, I realize how much was lost by my inability to ask follow up questions to things Pipe was telling me at the time. I spent so much time with Pipe, but was never told where the burial site was, though a marker on the Moose Lake bridge crossing marks the site of the actual battle region."

Paul explained. "Maybe Pipe knew the general area; he did speak about the battle, but he never took me to the site of what they called the special rock, or the rock that marked the burial site."

Paul discovered the place quite accidentally, when he pulled into a driveway off a winding county highway one day.

"Pipe passed away in 1992. The discussions that I had with him before he passed on drew me to look for that site. I was driving around and read the sign that marked the battle site, but that was like the starting point of my attempt to explore what happened. I tried to envision the battle. I wondered where the rock was that Pipe had spoken of. I struck out to find it."

"Hay Creek flows into the Chippewa River south of there. I walked around, roamed hills in the whole region up there, and thought about the strategy of the battle. For 5 or 6 years I looked around when I happened to be in the area. I remember him saying a big rock in the field marked the memorial site. Highway S winds to highway 77 and runs parallel to the river. One day I decided to drive up this driveway, and there it was. All these things flooded through my mind. It was never really lost. I drove up, saw the rock and it was in the field that he had told me about not far from a whole bunch of other places I had already poked around. I'll always remember this."

As he came to a stop in the yard, he glanced off to the left, and there stood the large pine trees and the rock that was described in the stories. Heart pounding, Paul stepped out of his car and started over to the rock to make his offering.

Overhead, hawks and eagles screeched a welcome and the wind delivered a song of victory. "I will always remember this day, and the things that flooded through my mind, and how my hair stood on end," recalled Paul.

He continued, "I realized that the rock marked the specific location of the burial grounds. On the left side of a field flood plain is a bluff and a farm. Behind the farm, a Hay Creek flows south into the Chippewa River. This was near the general area where the battle took place so many years ago." Paul's initial discovery of the historic burial site occurred in 1999.

After offering his tobacco at the spirit rock, Paul glanced toward the house and saw the curtains drop. He walked over to the home and knocked at the door. There was no answer. He went to the back of the house and knocked again. An elderly woman, Dorothy Wagner, the direct descendant of the Robertsons, answered the door.

Paul explained the reason that he had come to this location, and Ms. Wagner said, "I know why you have come." What followed was a brief meeting with Dorothy Wagner, which verified Paul's speculation that he had, indeed, found the historic location that he had long been searching for. Ms. Wagner was open and hospitable to questions, and commented, "It has been 30 or 40 years since anyone has come here. The Indians showed my father the location of the burials, and they told him where to plant the trees so we would never disturb the burial site." Another family member later added that John Frogg from the Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa Reservation was the last person that they could remember who came there to make an offering. That appears to be around 1959 or the early 1960s.

With a sense of relief at realizing his search was over, Paul now had an awareness that further discussion was needed on this matter. Several visits to the area occurred during the following years. Paul's most recent visit was in May 2007, when he visited the granddaughter, Sally Myers, who is the current landowner or caretaker of the site. Sally's mother, who moved back from Chicago, is the sister of Dorothy Wagner, and is 101 years old, and is in the process of subdividing the land to several family members.

The homestead land in the Moose Lake area, near Hayward, Wisconsin, belonged to Ole Robertson and his son Robert "Bob" Robertson. Ole was an early lumberjack and logger, and settled in this region in the 1880s after the Civil War.

Ole became good friends with the Ojibwe who often hunted for their winter food in the area and camped on his land. His son Bob at one time was responsible for opening and closing the gates at the dam on Hay Creek, and at other sites along the river.

Bob later became a well known and respected farmer in the Moose Lake area. Bordered by farms, the land is lush with green and gently rolling hills, fringed by majestic pine trees. The ancestors of the Robertsons reside in a beautiful home at the top of a hill that is surrounded by meadows and farmlands.

At the top of that hill nearby, stands a semi-circle of stately pine trees. At the center of the circle is a massive rock. The story has been told and retold of Ojibwe people arriving

at this rock to make traditional offerings of tobacco and food, some of them riding on horseback. The people often camped at this location for several days. Bob Robertson told his children that the Ojibwe people would always come to this place, and the children were instructed not to disturb this location. Because he so believed in the sacredness of the site, he planted trees to mark the burial site in order to make sure his family would not disturb any burials. Sally Myers called the site, "grandpa's special trees."

This beautiful setting is the resting place for hundreds of Dakota and Ojibwe warriors who fought a battle.

The battle, according to the roadside marker, took place in 1790, near the current Moose Lake Bridge, about half of a mile south of the Chippewa River straights. The river has fast running water, all rocks and a narrow opening.

"I imagine canoes mainly coming upstream, 100 or more canoes of Dakota (Sioux) who mainly inhabited this area before they were pushed out. In 1840, according to William Warren, the Winnebago were fighting with the Sioux as well. They were historic enemies. I can imagine that there could have been other people within a 60 mile radius from other tribes as well, other Ojibwe bands, other allies of the Dakota," stated Paul.

Again, according to the roadside marker, a group of nearly 700 Dakota warriors were traveling in canoes through the rapid waters of the Chippewa River, and were ambushed by a group of nearly 400 Ojibwe warriors. Many hundreds of lives were lost, both Dakota and Ojibwe.

"What Pipe said was that the Ojibwe filled several canoes with food and other goods and sent them back with an admonishment that if the Dakota warriors were ever sent back here again, the Ojibwe would be sending more food and goods back as a tribute to the warriors that were not going to come home," said Paul.

Paul has often thought of this place, and wondered about its significance to the people of Lac Courte Oreilles. "The Dakota and Ojibwe have different burial customs, so possibly the Dakota could have been placed on scaffolds as their final resting place or laid on the hillside." What is clear from the stories told, sometime around 1790 a battle took place, and for more than 160 years people visited that site."

Jerry Smith, Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, commented, "My grandpa Henry Smith told me this story about the battle. It goes back to 1745 or earlier. In the Village of Paquawong, there was a trading post. People were camped for the evening, enjoying their evening meal. It was during ricing time. One of the campers noticed a horsefly, signaling horses in the vicinity. Since the Ojibwe primarily traveled by canoe, this alarmed the campers, it was a warning that the enemy was near. To protect women and children from the impending battle, they were hidden from view in the



nearby woods and covered with leaves and brush. A party of Ojibwe warriors was sent to investigate.”

“Downriver, they discovered a large encampment of Dakota warriors who were planning a battle strategy against their Ojibwe enemies. The Dakota warriors were ambushed and all were wiped out except one, who was returned home with gifts and a warning to never return to this area. The Ojibwe buried their dead and every year conducted ceremonies at the spirit stone. Over the years, people have left offerings every time they passed this area,” according to Smith.

During the last few years, Paul’s attention was brought back to the issue of this historic site often, and he had a feeling that there must be some type of ceremony held for this sacred place once again. The issue became more pressing when Paul’s cousin, Scott Hill from the Oneida Nation and of Dakota lineage, expressed uneasiness due to a dream he had about this location. Paul began talking to people from the community of Lac Courte Oreilles, some of whom hold positions as ceremonial and tribal leaders. It was time to plan a return to the historic site. It was time to offer a “ghost feast” for all the fallen warriors, and to pay respect to the Ojibwe and Dakota history.

The present owner, Sally Myer, was apprehensive about the visit and much correspondence occurred between Paul and Mrs. Myer. An item of concern for Mrs. Myer was possible liability on her part pertaining to visitors on her property. Paul communicated with the landowner by telephone and through letters, assuring that there would be a waiver of liability statement for the owners protection.

Paul wrote in a letter to Ms. Myer, “I would anticipate that this ceremony will take about a half hour or so to conduct. Our intent is not to infringe upon your privacy, or disrupt your environment in any way during this short period of time,” referring to the planned visit to the burial site.

Paul began inviting people to attend a ceremonial gathering at the location of the historic battle site and burial ground at the “Spirit Rock” near Moose Lake.

This event was planned for Saturday May 26, the weekend of the national Memorial Day holiday 2007. Each person attended for different reasons.

Vietnam Veteran and Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal member, Gary Quaderer, related: “I was out there once with Paul to check out the site. There was a conflict there between the Sioux and the Ojibwe. When I heard there was a “ghost feast” planned to honor the fallen warriors, I became interested. As a Vietnam veteran, I felt that this was a respectful thing to do. I tried to piece everything together, as I thought of this event long ago. Who buried the people? What emotions must have gone through the people? I thought it was appropriate to bring the eagle staff that represents our fallen warriors.”

Great-grandson of John Frogg, George "Bud" Morrow, stated, "I saw the marker and always wondered about that place. I heard Paul was bringing a group there. I became interested and I wanted to know more about the area. I had been there before, and I saw how fast the river is, and saw the terrain. It's a special place."

Mike Sullivan commented, "This was a very historic occasion. It is meaningful because it is a part of the history of our people."

On the day of the event, the weather was cool and cloudy. A caravan of vehicles headed toward the site, and stopped near a farmhouse and a steep bluff. Leaving their cars and vans parked at the roadside, approximately 25 people walked up a grassy hill.

At the top of the hill were the pines, and a faint outline of the ceremonial rock. Once assembled near the rock at the top of the hill, Gary Quaderer, Vietnam War veteran, placed the Lac Courte Oreilles Veterans Eagle Feather staff next to the spirit rock.

Gordon Jourdain (Maajigwaneyaash) offered a beautiful Ojibwe prayer. A feast of berries, bread, manomin (wild rice) and fish was shared by the participants, and an offering was made to the spirits.

Several songs, an eagle song, a healing song, and veterans honoring song, were sounded to commemorate the spirits of the fallen warriors.

A light rain began to fall, but soon stopped and the air was clear and fresh. Gifts of quilts, wild rice, jewelry, and maple syrup were placed on a blanket to be given to the landowner, Sally Myer, and her elderly mother as a symbol of appreciation.

The women, dressed in ceremonial skirts, carried the bundle of gifts down the hill to the Myers' home, leaving a note which stated, "Please accept these gifts from the people of Lac Courte Oreilles, Miigwech."

The area was cleared, to be left as it was found, and the atmosphere was filled with laughter and light hearted conversation as the people made their way down the hill to their vehicles. The group later assembled at the historic marker site by the Moose Lake Bridge.

Following the visit of the Lac Courte Oreilles people to the sacred site, Myers has expressed her gratitude in a letter to Mr. Rusty Barber, Lac Courte Oreilles Vice Chair, Mr. Paul DeMain, and the people of Lac Courte Oreilles. Ms. Myers wrote: "Many thanks to you all for the wonderful, very generous gifts. I do appreciate your thoughtfulness."

John Broihahn from the Wisconsin State Historical Society, shared his opinion on the matter of historical sites which are situated on privately owned land. "State law can protect cemeteries on private land, but does not extend to other property such as the ceremonial rock at the burial site. We can put this site in our data base as a historic site

and this will provide a little bit of protection. Your willingness to work with landowners is the most positive thing you could accomplish.”

Jerry Smith concluded, “Something that may help this situation is that the landowner can get a tax (property) break for the historic value of the land.”

Future visits to this beautiful and historic site may be received with a better understanding of the ceremonial beliefs that brought the people there on that late spring day. Hopefully, the landowners and the tribal officials, through research and mutual hospitality, will be able to reach an agreement to welcome annual visits to the site. It’s only appropriate to practice the Ojibwe custom of honoring fallen warriors in an appropriate manner.

By bringing the people to visit this sacred place, Paul, once again, has lived up to his name as Skabewis, the Messenger.

***Editors Note: I was not the only one in the region to remember the story of the Spirit Rock. As news of the gathering traveled on the reservation, I discovered that several other individuals had also found the rock, or heard different stories about it and the battle over the years.***

***In conversations, it is clear, that while we may have several different versions of the story, or perhaps a story that merged more than one battle, the story of the Hay Creek/Horse Fly Battle is one that the elders wanted to live on, the story of the burial site of the warriors from both nations that stood up for the land and principles they believed in.***

***Skabewis***

Permission to reprint this article was given to the Town of Round Lake Plan Commission by Paul DeMain.

## CCC Camps

During the early 1930's, several national programs were developed to help bring economic relief from the Great Depression. One of those was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program designed to reduce unemployment among young men and preserve the nations natural resources. In Wisconsin, 92,000 men carried out conservation projects in 45 CCC camps throughout the state.

The site of one of those former CCC camps is located in the Town of Round Lake at the intersection of Moose Lake Rd (#164) and Fire Ln #174, S28 T41N R5W. The location is marked with a sign, and there are remains of fireplaces/chimneys-said to be from officer housing. The following are excerpts from "Sparta District Annual 1937, Civilian Conservation Corps, Sixth Corps Area": "2617<sup>th</sup> Company F-31, Hayward WI.

On August 24<sup>th</sup> 1934, the original company from Fort Sheridan (IL) arrived at the site of the old Hines Lumber Co Spur No. 2, the present location of Camp Sawyer. Tents were erected and the camp was cleared of debris and boulders in the days that followed. Contractors arrived and the construction of barracks and other buildings commenced. Isolated in the middle of the Chequamegon National Forest and situated 17 miles from the nearest village (Winter, pop. 250), the immediate construction of truck trails and fire lanes was of great importance. The Barker Lake Road was repaired, and the Venison Creek Road was constructed, along with the building of several necessary bridges. Roadside clean-up, fire hazard reduction, timber stand improvement, and timber survey projects were outlined for the vicinity.

During the summer of 1936, the Black Lake Fire Tower was constructed. The tower is one of the highest in the United States and is largely responsible for the excellent control of forest fires in the region." A Winter Sports Center, located at Snipe Lake, was laid out and built during the winter months. Tobogganing, skiing and ice skating facilities feature this project and were responsible for attracting hundreds of winter sports enthusiasts to this regions."

Site: Wisconsin Historical Society website