

# Newsletter

September, 2001

Dear Members and Friends,

Here it is, nearly time for our annual meeting and conference again! I hope many of you will be able to join us in Petoskey for this wonderful event, for your board has an outstanding weekend planned for you once again. See the enclosed brochure for details of "The Last Good Country:" Hemingway and the Native Americans. My good friend, Dr. James Nagel, will be yours, too, before the weekend is over, and he will bring us insights into Hemingway's treatment of the American Indian in his writing. Jim is extremely popular with audiences all over the world because of his delightful and understandable style of delivery as well as his brilliant literary work.

Our conference this year will be dedicated to the memory of our departed friend, Jack Hemingway, and a related presentation will be made to the Little Traverse Historical Museum at Friday's welcome reception. Jack made his first visit to Petoskey shortly before his death, and it was his fondness for the museum's Native American collection which inspired us to use this particular theme this year. We had hoped, of course, when we chose the theme, that he would be with us to celebrate the heritage he so admired. Those of us who met Jack and heard him speak at Oak Park in 1999 found him to be very honest, open, charming, and possessed of a great sense of humor. He will be greatly missed.

This might be a good time to reread the Nick Adams stories to get into the mood for our adventures Up North! Some books dealing with the Native Americans in northern Michigan are *Indians of North America: The Ojibwa*, by Helen Hornbeck Tanner; *A History: Grand Traverse Region*, by Dr. M. L. Leach; *A Look Around Little Traverse Bay*, edited by Mary Candace Eaton; and *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* by Chief Mack-e-te-be-nessy (A.J. Blackbird). The latter two (and perhaps the others) are available from the Little Traverse Historical Society Museum at 100 Depot St, Petoskey, MI, 49770, telephone (231) 347-2620. Board member Art Wagner has written an excellent review of the book by Chief Blackbird, whose former home in Harbor Springs we will be visiting as part of our Saturday activities. I am including his review in this newsletter for your enjoyment and to whet your appetite to know more about this interesting character and his people.

In general business this year we will be electing three new board members to replace Chuck Totten, Rosemary Horvath, and Kay Smith, all of whom have resigned because of changes in their personal lives and schedules. We will be bringing you a slate of excellent nominees, and you may, of course, offer other nominations from the floor during the meeting. Many thanks are due these three loyal and hard-working members, and we hope to still see them at our conferences as often as possible. Please especially remember Kay, her son Mark, and his family in your thoughts and prayers as he battles a very serious illness.

Board member Carole Underwood has arranged for us to have some great looking tee shirts this year! We got the Beefy Tees! They are long-sleeved, stone-washed blue in color, with navy print. They will feature a Native American silhouetted in a canoe and a very attractive feather and bead motif, along with the conference information. Please fill out the order form when you send in your registration, and yours will be awaiting you when you arrive at the Perry!

I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Petoskey in October! We have some great times and some great food planned, so make your reservations today.

Best regards always,

Charlotte Ponder, president

## THE LAST INDIANS IN MICHIGAN AND HEMINGWAY'S "THE LAST GOOD COUNTRY"

### A Review of: *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan*

By Chief Mack-e-te-be-nessy (A. J. Blackbird)

A sense of divine presence permeates the forest interval in Hemingway's "The Last Good Country." Nick and his sister discover signs, such as "very old" Indian firestones, left by Native Americans who had lived in the forest. Their encounter is a spiritual one; the traces of the ancient forest dwellers "spoke" of a sense of harmony with the divinity embodied in the natural world. ". . . this kind of woods makes me feel awfully religious," says his sister, Littless.

This sense of harmony countering the disharmony of the intruding settlers is one of the themes in an intriguing little volume (128 pages) by one of the last Indians to have lived among the original inhabitants of the northeastern Michigan, Chief Mack-e-te-be-nessy. His name, literally "Blackhawk," is spelled Mack-aw-de-be-nessy in the Introduction, but he went by the name Blackbird.

Originally published in 1887, this volume of memoirs has been reprinted by the Little Traverse Regional Historical Society (Box 162, Petoskey). Last fall, Constance Cappel, author of *Hemingway in Michigan*, mentioned the book in her remarks at a luncheon in the society's museum. A number of the audience promptly (decorously, after lunch, that is) rushed to the gift shop counter, where we found only two copies for sale. Let's hope the museum has found more copies in the back room.

The chief lived with the tribe whose summer camp extended from Arbor Croche (now Harbor Springs) to Cross Village. Winters were spent trapping and sugaring further south along the Lake Michigan coast, near the Muskegon River.

In addition to personal accounts of his childhood, his education in Ohio, his work as interpreter, he includes historical information about the other tribes of the area, the Diaspora of the local people, and the troubled negotiations with government bodies. He debunks the notion that Mackinac Island gets its name from the turtle. Instead, the name comes from the small, independent tribe who lived there, "Mi-shi-ne-macki naw-go." Unfortunately, they were annihilated by the Iroquois.

Unlike the warring tribes, his people, according to Chief Mack-e-te-be-nessy, led morally disciplined lives in keeping with principles nurtured in them by their parents and families. "These precepts or moral commandments by which the Ottawa and Chippewa nations of Indians were governed in their primitive state, were almost the same as the ten commandments . . ." he states.

Some of the anecdotes in this narrative are arresting. One of the Chief's brothers, William, also educated in Ohio, went on to Rome to prepare for the Catholic priesthood, with intentions of working to improve the lot of the Indians upon his return. On a morning within days of his ordination, he was found murdered in his room. No one was identified or prosecuted for the murder. Culprit and motive remain a mystery.

Other accounts of duplicity by government agents and disappointing negotiations vividly depict the loss of trust felt by the Indians.

Most interesting are the nostalgic descriptions of the feasts and customs of his tribe and family.

The last 21 pages constitute a grammar of the Ottawa and Chippewa language.

By the time of Ernest Hemingway's birth, all but a few small stands of the virgin forests of Michigan were gone. During his young years in Northern Michigan, he found only vestiges of the heritage described in this volume. Unlike the caricatures of *Torrents of Spring* and the lost souls of "Ten Indians," the progenitors described by Chief Mack-e-te-be-nessy and those spirits in the forests of "The Last Good Country" constitute a moral genealogy, the last good people of the last good country.

This book is a terrific read and an inspiring preparation for the events at this year's Michigan Hemingway Weekend in October.

Arthur Wagner

Mail to: **Michigan Hemingway Society**  
**P.O. Box 953**  
**Petoskey, Michigan 49770**

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please register \_\_\_\_\_ people for the fall, 2001 conference.

I have enclosed a check for \_\_\_\_\_ which includes membership dues for the year 2002. (sorry, no credit cards)

\_\_\_\_\_ I cannot attend the conference, but I have enclosed \$10 for membership dues.

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#### T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

Cost is \$20 for long-sleeve 100% cotton Hanes Beefy Tee, sizes S – XL; \$21.25 for XXL  
Color is Stone-Washed Blue (brand new color!) with Navy Print

S\_\_\_\_\_ M\_\_\_\_\_ L\_\_\_\_\_ XL\_\_\_\_\_ XXL\_\_\_\_\_

Indicate quantity of each size. Cost may be added to registration fee or separate check may be made to Michigan Hemingway Society

Theme, dates, and location of conference will be artfully displayed with these logos on upper left chest of T-shirts.



Announcing...

**"The Last  
Good Country"...**  
**Hemingway and the  
Native Americans**

**The Eleventh Annual Conference  
of the  
Michigan Hemingway Society**

In cooperation with Little Traverse  
Historical Society Museum and American  
Spoon Foods

October 26, 27, and 28, 2001  
Stafford's Perry Hotel  
Petoskey, Michigan

★★ **Conference Fee:** ★★  
**\$125 if paid by Sept. 25**  
★★ **\$135 if paid later.** ★★

Conference schedule on reverse side.

For more information

~ Visit our website at  
[www.northquest.com/hemingway](http://www.northquest.com/hemingway)

~ phone our president,  
Charlotte Ponder, at (256) 350-7745

~ E-mail us at [mhs@northquest.com](mailto:mhs@northquest.com) or  
[C2ponder@aol.com](mailto:C2ponder@aol.com)



**Michigan Hemingway Society  
2001 Fall Conference Schedule**

**Friday, October 26, 2001**

- Reception Little Traverse Historical Society Museum
- History and Folklore Panel:  
Petoskey area Native American Elders

**Saturday, October 27, 2001**

- Chief Blackbird Museum, Harbor Springs
- Tour Middle Village Cemetery
- Lunch Crow's Nest restaurant
- Evening banquet, Perry Hotel
- Keynote speaker, Dr. James Nagel, noted Hemingway scholar and author, editor of *Hemingway in Love and War: the Lost Diaries of Agnes von Kurowsky*, basis for the movie "In Love and War."

**Sunday, October 28, 2001**

- Brunch, Perry Hotel
- Dr. Constance Cappel, author of *Hemingway in Michigan*, on her new book on Hemingway and Prudence Bolton, *Sweetgrass and Smoke*
- Cuba Report: 2001 Hemingway symposium

Contact us for full details of these events or visit our Website. Tickets for individual events are also available for those not able to attend the entire conference.

To register, send your name, address, telephone number, and check for the conference fee, payable to the Michigan Hemingway Society, to:

**The Michigan Hemingway Society  
P.O. Box 953  
Petoskey, MI 49770**

For Hotel Reservations,  
Contact **Stafford's Perry Hotel: (800) 737-1899**  
(Mention the Michigan Hemingway Society to receive the special conference room rate.)

or

**Petoskey-Harbor Springs-Boyer Country Visitors'  
Bureau: (800) 845-2828**



***“The Last  
Good Country”...  
Hemingway and the  
Native Americans***

October 26-28, 2001

*Itinerary*

**Friday:**

- 6:00 P.M. Welcome Reception Little Traverse History Museum  
Charlotte Ponder, president, MHS  
Joe Mitchell, Odawa elder, Yvonne Keshick, Odawa band member

**Saturday:**

- 9:30 A.M. Tours begin at Blackbird Museum, Harbor Springs; see separate directions  
Gather in front of Perry at 9:00 if desiring to travel in caravan
- 12:30 P.M. Lunch at the Crow’s Nest in Cross Village; see direction sheet.
- 6:00 P.M. Gather in Perry Upper Lobby for social time before dinner
- 6:10 P.M. Move into Reycraft Room to hear Simon Otto, author of books on Native  
American traditions, speak about the Ghost Supper
- 7:00 P.M. Dinner, following Simon’s blessing of the food in the Odawa language
- 8:00 P.M. **Dr. James Nagel**, Keynote Speaker

[TURN BACK YOUR CLOCKS!]

**Sunday:**

- 8:30 A.M. Brunch in the Reycraft Room, Perry Hotel
- 9:30 A.M. General Meeting to elect board members
- 9:45 A.M. Dr. Constance Cappel, on her new work about Hemingway and Prudence  
Bolton
- 10:15 A.M. Cuba Report: Carole Underwood, Jan Byrne, and Michael Federspiel
- 10:45 A.M. Closing Remarks and farewell until next year. Board remains for brief  
meeting