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SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL RELATIONS AND THE SOCIAL
PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

by

Bryan Thomas Swanson

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Geography

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 2005

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first and foremost acknowledge my family; my parents, Thomas and Dolores Swanson, and my sisters, Andrea and Noelle Swanson. I would also like to acknowledge my girlfriend, Sarah A. Barnes. All these individuals patiently supported me through this process. Writing this thesis was one of the most grueling physical and mental challenges that I have had to overcome; without their support and love this would not have been possible.

The next four people made this thesis possible. I would like to show my greatest gratitude toward Dr. Deborah Che, my thesis advisor at Western Michigan University for guiding and supporting me during this thesis process. Her knowledge and commitment toward my thesis and me made completion possible. Her effort and revisions will never be forgotten. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Gregory Veeck. His passion for Geography, along with his precious advice on graduate school, made me appreciate my thesis and discipline. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Jordan Yin. Dr. Yin's commitment to my success, his teachings in class, have truly assisted me in choosing a career path

Acknowledgments—continued

and in refining the thesis topic to make it doable. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Wayne E. Kiefer, at Central Michigan University. Dr. Kiefer provided me with invaluable information about the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe as well as plat maps which I used throughout my thesis. His advice and direction were very valuable.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. David Dickason, Chair of the Geography Department at Western Michigan University for giving me the opportunity to study at such a fine institution. It has truly been a great opportunity.

This thesis is dedicated to Thomas, Dolores, Andrea, Noelle, and Sarah.

Love and Appreciation to All!

Bryan Thomas Swanson

SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL RELATIONS AND THE SOCIAL
PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Bryan Thomas Swanson, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2005

This thesis focuses on how the historical and cultural geography of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Mount Pleasant, Michigan and specifically on through their Soaring Eagle Casino reshaped the physical and cultural landscape of Isabella County. For this research I utilized documentary/archival evidence such as local histories, newspapers, plat maps and I also conducted field surveys. The research findings indicated that through the Soaring Eagle Casino the Saginaw Chippewa tribe has changed Isabella County, as well as their own social standing. Since 1993 the tribe has used casino revenues to purchase 1185 acres of land to add to the Isabella Reservation. The tribe has also transformed space through housing and cultural center developments and culturally-relevant signage. Finally, the tribe has utilized casino revenues to fund social services and distributed 2% of revenues to local municipalities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The headquarters of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe are located on the Isabella Reservation in Isabella County, Michigan. They are one of nine tribes in Michigan which operates 17 casinos. Most Indian casinos are located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, which are hours away from major population centers in Michigan. The closest tribal casino to those population centers is Soaring Eagle Casino, which is owned and operated by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe. The casino is a four-star resort, the largest casino in Michigan, as well as one of the largest east of the Mississippi River. Casino gaming takes place on Saginaw Chippewa reservation, which is located on parts of six townships within Isabella County.

Even though gaming in some form has taken place on the reservation since the late 1970's, it has only been since 1993 with the opening of the Soaring Eagle Casino, that gaming has become a significant economic activity in Isabella County. Thus the Saginaw Chippewa, who once

owned thousands and lost all but 450, are slowly changing the physical landscape of Isabella County it once had control over. The tribe's two percent dispersion rate to local municipalities, with the City of Mount Pleasant receiving the most funds, enables municipalities to improve Public Safety departments and infrastructure such as roads and streets. While prior to 1993, it seemed that the tribe was steadily losing the small control it had over Isabella County, they are now gaining and maintaining control over the physical landscape of Isabella County due to casino-driven changes. The tribe is also continuing to purchase land both within the bounds of the reservation and outside it. The tribe is using some of this land for residential developments consisting of mostly single-family detached homes. These homes are sold to tribal members in attempts to lure back some of the Saginaw Chippewas that left the reservation.

The tribe is also socially transforming space throughout the county. The Soaring Eagle Casino has surpassed the Central Michigan University as the largest employer in Isabella County. The tribe has not only brought more jobs to the county, but also has an educational collaborative with Central Michigan University.

In this thesis, I explored how the Saginaw Chippewa Indians have affected both the physical landscape and social relations in Isabella County. This study is useful in examining the changes in land holdings, landscape and power. The Saginaw Chippewa were originally granted land and now are gaining land back within the reservation and elsewhere in the county with casino revenues, disbursements to municipalities, and jobs. The social power relations in Isabella County are shifting. Whereas in the past, the Saginaw Chippewa were considered "second rate" citizens, their production of jobs and capital in Mount Pleasant is granting greater status and respect to the tribe. Isabella County is changing in large part due to the Saginaw Chippewas.

Research Objectives

The development of the Soaring Eagle Casino by the Saginaw Chippewa tribe has affected the City of Mount Pleasant, Michigan. The casino has left physical and social changes on the landscape of Mount Pleasant. To study the changing production of space, this thesis focuses on the following primary question: How has the Soaring Eagle casino shaped the physical and cultural

landscape of Isabella County? I look specifically at how the casino's revenues has reshaped the social relations in Isabella County through 1) the acquisition of land, 2) disbursement to local municipalities, 3) community development via construction of a cultural center and housing for tribal members, and 4) inscribing tribal identity on the landscape through signage.

Methods

For my thesis research, I utilized documentary/archival evidence such as local histories, newspapers, maps, and property records. Archived documents were key data sources. Mt. Pleasant local histories also provided a decidedly European-American viewpoint of the city's history. Two works, This Place Mt. Pleasant and Mount Pleasant 1854-1954 highlight the early founders of the city. However, both of these works seem to minimize or subtract the presence of any Native American tribe as being the early founders. Although Euro-American, Minyard's 2002 research paper, "The disappearance of the Isabella Indian Reservation: The role of Missionaries, Governments, Agents, Lawyers, and

Speculators" more sympathetically indicated the loss of lands in the Isabella Reservation.

The two newspapers in Mount Pleasant, Michigan are The Morning Sun and the Tribal Observer. The Morning Sun, which is published daily, is the main newspaper source for the citizens of Mount Pleasant. The Tribal Observer, which is published weekly, is solely published and edited by the Saginaw Chippewa Indians. Both newspapers are archived at the Clarke Historical Library on the campus of Central Michigan University.

Researching both of the aforementioned newspapers is critical in gaining different perspectives of the tribe and the relationship the city has with the tribe. The relationship between The Morning Sun and the tribe is fascinating and conflictual. When The Morning Sun wrote a negative article about the tribe, the tribe retaliated by simply blocking the reporters from entering any tribal meetings.

Through analyzing past issues of both newspapers, one can attain valuable information and the distinct viewpoint that comes with each paper. The Tribe disburses 2 percent semi-annually what is earned by the Soaring Eagle Casino to local communities and municipalities around Mt. Pleasant. Before the Tribal

Observer was published, financial information was not available to the public. However, because the tribe owns the newspaper, that information is now published and is available to the public through the tribe's paper or the website <http://www.sagchip.org/tribalobserver>. Each issue of the Tribal Observer contains the tribal constitution, pertinent tribal issues, and a list containing members on the tribal council.

Map interpretation was used primarily due to the abundance of available maps. Indian allotment maps were made on the Isabella Reservation beginning in 1871 and ending in 1892. The Isabella Reservation was held by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe and totaled 138,000 acres or six townships. By examining the plat books from 1997, 2000, and 2003, I found the tribe has been able to purchase land and expand their reservation to over 1,000 acres. These lands purchased by the tribe are turned over, to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They are held in trust and become the Tribal Trust Lands, which are recognized by the Bureau of the Census.

Organization of the Study

To examine the process by the Saginaw Chippewa have reshaped the physical and cultural landscape of Isabella County, I have organized the study in the following manner. Chapter 2 examines the pros and cons of indigenous tourism and then casino gaming on Native American reservations in particular. Chapter 3 provides the history of the Saginaw Chippewa and the Soaring Eagle Casino. Chapter 4 features the results of how the Saginaw Chippewa have changed Isabella County. Finally, Chapter 5 will offer concluding remarks on how the Saginaw Chippewa are reshaping the physical and social landscape of Isabella County, Michigan.

CHAPTER II

INDIGENOUS TOURISM

To fully understand the issue of casino gaming on Indian lands, we must first understand Indigenous tourism broadly. Tourism can potentially be a major source of economic growth for Aboriginal communities in the U.S. and abroad. However, careful management is required to protect the negative impacts on the quality of life in these communities.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the pros and cons of Indigenous tourism practiced overseas. Then I will turn to the advantages and disadvantages associated with a subset of Indigenous tourism, casino gaming on Native American reservations. Finally, I will discuss the case of the Saginaw Chippewa and their Soaring Eagle Casino development.

Indigenous Tourism

Tourism can provide economic, social, and cultural benefits to Indigenous peoples. Tourism may be a form of sustainable development for Aboriginal Australians.

Altman and Finlayson (1993) found that tourism can generate jobs for Aboriginal people, in the service provision both to tourists in the hospitality sector and in national parks. Employment opportunities exist for all age groups and for both low-skilled and high-skilled Aboriginals (Parker, 1993). Tourism also provides investment opportunities. Tourism is an industry in which both men and women can be successful owners and operators. The Gagudju Association, formed in 1978 by the Aboriginal people of the Kakadu region, holds sole equity in the Four Seasons Cooida Hotel and Four Seasons Crocodile Motel, both in the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Cultural tours and joint ventures in cultural tourism are yet another avenue the aborigines are using in Australia. Cultural tours have been successful in communities where enterprise centers on an individual or family group and is maintained as small-scale operation. A tour company in Australia named Ipolera Tours illustrates how a small-scale, family-based commercial venture can work successfully. Joint ventures in cultural tourism offer opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate jointly with non-Aborigines in the

provision of goods and services to the tourism industry (Altman, 1990; Finlayson, 1990).

Finally, the arts and crafts industry in some Aboriginal communities can provide indirect involvement in tourism, although for the aboriginal artists and their promoters a primary concern is whether to produce material for the fine art market or the tourist market (Altman, 1990; Finlayson, 1990).

In other remote regions, tourism might be the only form of economic stability for aboriginal peoples. In Canada's Northwest Territories, Notzke (1998) discusses the importance of aboriginal tourism in the Arctic. Because of the remoteness of this area, many people rarely experience the vast beauty the Arctic holds. Her study examines the visitors' perspective: their expectations, perceptions, and degree of satisfaction, as they are exposed to an "aboriginal tourism experience." Tourists come to the Arctic to experience the mythology of the "North", as the "last frontier" or a place "untouched by Man". Notzke believes that tourism is in the business of selling dreams, which is what the Inuvialuit do for their customers. The majority of the tourists who visit the Arctic indicated they were satisfied with the experience the Inuvialuit offered

them. Of the surveyed tourists, 70 percent believed that the "experience" taught them something about aboriginal people.

Tourism on Indigenous land can also help indigenous peoples to sustain their culture. According to Vitols (1992), whites have been misinterpreting the distinct culture of indigenous groups in the Yukon Territory. Fort Selkirk, which was managed by the "Yukoners", had been primarily interpreted from a white perspective. The presentation of Indian heritage, which was largely by whites, included an inherent cultural bias in their analysis. When the Selkirk First Nation acquired the fort, they interpreted history in their own way.

However, tourism can negatively impact indigenous people. Waitt (1999) states that Aboriginal community attitudes towards tourism and tourist representations are antithetical. Those opposed to tourism demand that all Aboriginal places of cultural significance ought to be closed to public access and returned entirely to the jurisdiction of relevant custodians (Waitt 1999). Jarvenpa (1994) similarly believes that indigenous tourism is destroying culture and opening up the indigenous-owned land to too many individuals. Jarvenpa believes that "cultural commoditization" in Dawson City,

which is located on the Klondike River and Yukon River in Canada, is undermining the indigenous cultural theme in Dawson City. In 1875, gold was found there. Between 1875 and 1898, an "influx of white prospectors" gathered and eventually established a settlement. The white settlers, or "sourdough", predominately ran the cultural activities of Dawson City. Primarily promoting the "frontier" theme, the sourdough attracted tourists from the United States with little intention of integrating the indigenous culture. The Yukon Order of Pioneers (YOOP), a men's fraternal association which was founded by pioneer miner-settlers, function as the "bourgeois" of Dawson City; thus this group controls how tourists view Dawson City. The YOOP place the Han (native peoples) in a negative, peripheral position as a social burden of Dawson City.

The Han finally established some form of tourism, but at a cost. The Han established "Han Fisheries", a salmon fishing business. The fishery would serve as a catalyst to increase understanding that "real Indians" were in Dawson City. However, tourism had a negative effect as the tribe opened the salmon crop, which was supposed to be just for Han use. For the first time in history the native community was tapping the tourist

economy but was depleting the salmon. Jarvenpa (1994) concludes that the Dawson City case suggests that cultural commoditization may unfold with variable intensity and with different impacts even within a relatively small community.

Casino Gaming on Native American Reservations

Beyond historical or environmental indigenous tourism, another subset of indigenous tourism is casino gaming. As Cozzetto (1995) believes casinos represent the "new economic buffalo" to many tribes across the nation. The passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988 stressed the importance of sovereignty to all Native American Tribes in the United States. It was this act that allowed gaming on reservations, which would attempt to address the blight many reservation Indians have been experiencing for the past century. The economic and social implications of Indian Gaming can have positive and negative effects both on the Native Americans and the surrounding areas. Cozzetto believes that many Indian leaders choose to focus on the economic benefits of tribal gaming and either ignore or outright dismiss its social implications.

Economically many Indian tribes have made tremendous inroads toward improving reservation life through the use of gambling revenues. Perhaps these economic benefits outweigh any social costs associated with gambling addiction. Perhoff (2001) believes that gaming will change an Indian tribe. Improvements in infrastructure; diversified tribal economies; heightened employment; augmented health, housing, education, and social program budgets; increased indigenous language retention; and generally renewed community vitality are all derived from Indian gaming on reservations.

Perhaps the most successful casino is the Foxwoods Casino Resort, which is owned by the Mashantucket Pequots of Connecticut and is the largest gambling casino in the Western world. Located in Ledyard, Connecticut, it is accessible to New York City, Boston and Providence, Rhode Island. The casino has been a success story for the Pequots and has brought improvements to the surrounding locations. Pequots and their neighbors may avail themselves of the reservation's free healthcare clinic and ambulance service, paid for with casino revenues. Additionally Foxwoods has generated many jobs. Between 1988 and 1993, Connecticut lost 185,000 jobs. In 1993, Foxwoods employed 10,000 people in the casino alone.

Foxwoods was one of only 100 casino style operations that actually made a profit (D'Hautesserre, 1999). Its success is largely due to its geographic proximity to New York City and Boston. In contrast most Indian casinos are geographically isolated, which results in their not generating profits.

While Foxwoods casino employs people in the Ledyard, Connecticut area, resident attitudes toward this casino are not necessarily positive. Carmichael (2000) suggests that residents who lived closer to Foxwoods had negative opinions toward the tribe, along with a negative perception of the environmental effects the casino has on the area. Carmichael found that people who did not work for the casino considered it detrimental to the surrounding region because of the increase in actual crime and traffic.

Indian gaming has been linked to gambling addiction problems as the number of pathological gamblers in Minnesota continue to increase. Tribal leaders need to take a proactive role in acknowledging that a gambling problem exists and in providing programs to address that a gambling problem exists and in providing programs to address the problem (Cozzetto, 1995).

Gaming may have negative impacts on tribes too. Cozzetto believes that the Devils Lake Lakota Sioux tribe in Minnesota is gaining economic independency through gaming, but programs are needed to address gambling addiction problems among Native Americans. Perhoff (2001) likewise finds gaming can strengthen tribal sovereignty by revitalizing Indian tribes along with Indian identity, but it can weaken tribal cultures, and tribal values, and increase domestic abuse. Furthermore, a casino may not increase overall per capita income. Looking at every county in Minnesota outside the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area, Gabe et al (2000) found the presence of a casino did not improve the per capita income in the study area. I will turn to the case of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe, and their land losses in Isabella County and the Soaring Eagle Casino, which draws 25 percent of its customers from the metro Detroit area, and has helped the tribe to reacquire some of its lands.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE SAGINAW CHIPPEWA INDIAN TRIBE

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the history of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Isabella County, Michigan, along with the development of the Soaring Eagle Casino. First, the discussion will focus on the history of Michigan's three major Indian tribes: the Chippewa (Ojibwe), Ottawa, and the Potawatomi. The history of the tribe will begin with the earliest Ojibwe settlement near Hudson Bay, Canada and then proceed to the later occupancy in Michigan. This chapter will also history the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, which led to the demise of the Chippewa and other Indian tribes in the Old Northwest Territory. The arrival of Euro-American settlers in Isabella County is also imperative in the discussion of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe and their land loss. Important treaties with the United States such as the Treaty of Greenville and the treaties of 1855 and 1864 will also be detailed. These treaties led to Saginaw Chippewa relocation and land loss. Finally, this

chapter will discuss the history of bingo and casino gaming on the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's Isabella reservation.

American Indian Tribes of Michigan

Early records indicate that the Native American Indian inhabitants of Michigan are descendants of the Ojibwe tribe of Canada (Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, 1965). The traditional accounts record the Ojibwe tribe as dwelling on the Atlantic coast north of the St. Lawrence River about 600 years ago. The early Ojibwe began moving westward with long-term stops on the St. Lawrence River, which is near present-day Montreal. The Ojibwe then moved on to Lake Huron, to Sault Ste. Marie, and finally to La Pointe, Wisconsin (Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, 1965). The Ojibwe then split into the three major tribes of Michigan today (Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi). These distinct three tribes that comprise the Three Fires Council, which share similar culture and geographic territory.

The Ottawa were seasonal wanderers and gathers of the land. They used the Great Lakes extensively. A symbol of Ottawa life is the birch bark canoe. When the

French came, the Ottawa people adapted well to the fur-trading economy largely due to the birch bark canoe (Staddon, 1996). The Ottawa are now found in the northern portion of the Great Lakes; and, in Michigan, the western half of the Lower Peninsula.

The Potawatomi tribe resided in the southwest corner of Michigan along the Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Rivers and in portions of northern Indiana. They moved to the southern portions of Michigan to avoid the harsher climates of northern Michigan (Staddon, 1996). Horticulture was key in the Potawatomi culture. Not only did they grow corn, beans, and squash, but also they were famed for their medicinal herbal gardens. Besides thriving from farming, through trading via canoe, helped the Potawatomi become a strong tribe. Many of the Potawatomi were forced to relocate by the U.S. military to Kansas and Oklahoma (Staddon, 1996).

The Chippewa also known as the Ojibwe, mainly depended on fishing, gathering, and hunting for food. Like the Potawatomi and the Ottawa, the Chippewa were nomadic in moving their villages to follow the fish or game. (Staddon, 1996). The Chippewa used the resources of the inland lakes, rivers, and streams (Staddon, 1996). They preferred locations near rivers in which they used

their birch-bark canoe to fish and trade furs with the French. They also used resources of the Great Lakes. The Chippewa traded freely with both the French and the British throughout the latter portions of the 1700's (Clifton, 1992).

The Chippewa are now presently the second largest tribal group in the United States with tribal bands in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, with some in Ontario, Canada. In Michigan however, they occupied the eastern half of the Lower Peninsula and most of the Upper Peninsula except the northern shore of Lake Michigan.

Early History of the Chippewa Pre-Michigan Settlement

The Ojibwe, the ancestors of the peoples who eventually became known as the Chippewa, did not inhabit the Saginaw River Region (Clifton, 1992). During these early years the ancestors hunted and gathered north of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. During this period, the Saginaw region was primarily occupied by the Sauk, Potawatomi, Fox and the Mascoutin. Only later due to wars did the Chippewa bands flow into this region of Michigan.

In Michigan, the St. Mary's River is the earliest permanent location for the Chippewa around the late 1500's (Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, 1965). St. Mary's River is located near Raber, MI, which is located in the Upper Peninsula near the border of Ontario, Canada. The Chippewa were once again driven westward through the fear of the encroaching Iroquois tribe. The Chippewa then returned to Sault Ste. Marie in the latter part of the 1660's. Father Nouvel lived with Chippewas from 1675-76 and stated that it was the custom for the Indians to move into the Saginaw valley in the winter to escape from the more severe winters of the upper lakes (Clifton, 1992). Once again the Chippewa were on the move except this time was to the south because of conflicts with the Iroquois. The Chippewa Indians were divided into several bands with each band observing hunting, fishing, trapping and food gathering rights over certain large areas.

The "Beaver Wars" which last from 1650-1700 depopulated much of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan including the Saginaw River region (Clifton, 1992). The Beaver Wars were between the Iroquois, Ojibwe, and Mohawk in attempts to become the only provider for fur to the French traders. Early in the 18th-Century the Saginaw

River region was again repopulated. The earliest Chippewa villages in the Saginaw River region date to about 1723. The Chippewa villages remained intermingled with the Ottawa (a tribe similar to the Chippewa); however, within a few decades the Ottawa migrated west and north. Because of this migration, the Saginaw Bay region was occupied largely by the Chippewa who were both expanding their population and territory.

By the time of the American era the Chippewa were well established in the northern and eastern parts of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Around 1810, at least two-dozen villages can be identified throughout the Lower Peninsula (Clifton, 1992). These villages ranged from Detroit in the southeast, to the Au Sable River in the northeast, and the near the Grand River in the West.

The Saginaw Chippewa Indians who occupy present-day Mt. Pleasant used this area as their winter basis. The early Chippewa called present-day Mt. Pleasant "Ojibiway Besse" (Cron, 2003). Before discussing how the Chippewa eventually settled in this area an imperative battle must be explained to why these Indians permanently relocated to Isabella County.

Rising Native American Conflicts Between Europeans

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Great Britain agreed that the Mississippi River would be the western boundary of the United States and the Great Lakes as the northern one. The Great Lakes states would be the Northwest Territory of the United States (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The Treaty of Paris in 1783 subsequently ended the Revolutionary War but allowed the British to stay in the Northwest Territory until the U.S. resolved land issues with the Native Americans who had been British allies. The Native Americans and British long had an alliance where the British supplied the Native Americans with gunpowder and guns and the Native Americans provided furs.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 allowed for the creation of as many as five states in the northwest portion of the Ohio Valley. Essentially, the territory was organized into the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The British and the Native Americans established a lucrative alliance with each other.

The passage of the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 sent American settlers into the Ohio Valley area at the rate

of 10,000 a year (Pittman and Covington, 1992). With the influx of settlers in the new territory, problems arose in which the Indians were attacking the settlers. By 1790, Congress yielded to the appeals for protection from the Indians by the settlers of the Northwest Territory. On, Oct. 22, 1790, an army was dispatched to the territory to punish the Wabash and the Miami. The army was swiftly ambushed and soundly defeated by Indians led by Chief Little Turtle. The Indians believed that they owned and had the moral right to the land. The defeat was a national humiliation and a major setback in terms of President Washington's plans for the Northwest Territory (Pittman and Covington, 1992).

Yet again in November 1791 an army was commissioned to attack the Indians led by Chief Little Turtle (Pittman and Covington, 1992)). More than 700 American soldiers died in fighting and resulted in yet another loss for President Washington and his American troops. With this second defeat, the citizens of every state were questioning the effectiveness of the government and the Constitution. This crisis was deemed critical for credibility of the young nation was almost destroyed (Pittman and Covington, 1992).

The Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794)

President Washington commissioned Commanding General Anthony Wayne in 1792 to train men in attempt to defeat the Indians in the Northwest Territory. In the fall of 1793, negotiations failed between the United States and the Indians (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The Indians refused to allow intruders on their land and the United States refused to ban any settlement by its citizens beyond the Ohio River. On September 11, 1793, Anthony Wayne received word to commence. In the spring he planned to launch an invasion against the Indians.

On August 20, 1794 Wayne's army invaded the Indian Territory at Fallen Timbers, which is just south of Toledo. It was named Fallen Timbers because the Indians were planning to ambush the U.S. soldiers; the Indians sought camouflage among trees that had been recently knocked over by a tornado. After about an hour, the battle ended with the Indians fleeing toward Fort Miami (in present-day Ohio), where the British had promised protection. Unfortunately, they were turned away because the British did not want to risk war with the United States. This battle is important to the Chippewa because it 1) drove the British from American soil and 2) broke

one of the strongest coalitions of Indians against the United States.

The Treaty of Greenville (1795)

The Indian loss at the Battle of Fallen Timbers broke up one of the strongest coalitions of Indian tribes (Chippewa, Ottawa, Pottawatomi, Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, and Wyandot) to fight the United States Government. The loss also meant that their lands would be open to settlers and the introduction of statehood. The treaties of Greenville and Detroit also lead to the displacement of many Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomi.

The Treaty of Greenville was signed on August 3, 1795; a year after Anthony Wayne defeated the tribes of the Old Northwest Territory (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The Greenville treaty was the model for all later treaties in Michigan. It opened Chippewa land in the Northwest to land cession and for the United States' westward expansion. The treaty was signed in Greenville, Ohio in which contained many Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Ottawa Indian tribes. The tribes ceded to the United States most of what are now Ohio, parts of Indiana, and multiple sites in Michigan. The latter included sixteen

scattered tracts at very strategic locations, such as Detroit and another at Mackinac. After the treaty was signed all tribes in this territory were forced to leave and eventually settled in other areas of Michigan.

The Treaty of Detroit (1807)

The Indian tribes of the Northwest Territory slowly began to witness the loss of their lands. The Treaty of Detroit in 1807 began yet another Chippewa land cession. This treaty defined which lands these Chippewa Bands (Saginaw, Black River, and Swan Creek) held in recognized title. However, this treaty confirmed Saginaw ownership of part of a large tract in southwest Michigan. The Chippewa (mostly the Black River and Swan Creek Bands) owned the northern third of this area while the remainder belonged to the Potawatomi and Huron Bands. Examining Article 6 of the 1807 treaty ceded this whole area to the United States. Article 6 also set aside several small tracts, or reservations, "for the accommodation of the said Indians" (Clifton, 1992).

The reservations included one at the mouth of the Black River (which is modern Port Huron) and three smaller ones on the tributaries of the Swan Creek. The

northern and western boundaries of the lands owned by the Saginaw River watershed bands remained undefined (Clifton, 1992). The tribes ceded roughly the southeastern quarter of Michigan's Lower Peninsula (this area went as far north as White Rock and just south of Harbor Beach on the "Thumb"). This was the first major cession in what that would lead to Michigan's statehood (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The federal government was weary of the tribes that were situated around Fort Dearborn in fear of another uprising with the British. So following this treaty, the Chippewa moved to the area north of Detroit near Saginaw Bay, or the Saginaw River Valley area.

The Treaty of Saginaw (1819)

Saginaw County, which is north of Detroit, was prior to the Treaty of Saginaw the center of the Indian population. The County was filled with 16 Indian reservations, with six reservations located on the Saginaw River and the other three located on the shores of Saginaw Bay (Clifton, 1992). Saginaw County was and is filled with streams and waterways, which made it a hunter and fisherman's paradise.

Thirteen years after the signing of the Treaty of Detroit, the Indian tribes of Michigan again signed another treaty with the United States. This treaty however would include ceding six million acres of land in Michigan located in the central Lower Peninsula of, or almost one-third of the state. This was the largest land cession in Michigan history. General Lewis Cass, who was the Governor of the Northwest Territories, had seen the settler population in other territories outside of Michigan increase to a greater extent. Relatively limited settlement was due to Michigan's very dense Indian population.

After the 1819 Treaty, the United States began the process of surveying, advertising, and selling the area that was ceded by the Saginaws (Clifton, 1992). According to the treaty, the Saginaws were supposedly obligated to settle in villages within their treaty-established reservations; however, many did not (Clifton, 1992). Around 1830 some of their smaller villages were found in the distant interior of Michigan such as on the headwaters of the Grand River. The Saginaw population continued to base most of their activity on the larger established villages within the 16 reservations on the lower Saginaw River and on Saginaw Bay, while using

Isabella County for hunting and gathering (Clifton, 1992).

Interestingly during 1833-1839 when the Isabella County area was being surveyed, the surveyors recorded not Indian Villages or other evidence of permanent settlement. In truth however, the Chippewa were using this area for their hunting grounds for a century.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830

After the war of 1812, U.S. policy moved towards acquiring the remaining Indian tribal lands in the organized states and territories east of the Mississippi River and resettling these eastern Indians west of the Mississippi. This act was passed on May 28, 1830 and became a nationwide federal initiative. These Indians would be sent to the eastern halves of Kansas and Oklahoma. This act is an example of "Geographic Separatism". Even though the United States wanted to assimilate Native Americans into the broader American culture, it then sent them to lands in which were isolated from the rest of the United States (Clifton, 1992). Some of the Black River and Swan Creek Chippewa

bands were removed under this policy in 1836 as well as some Saginaw River watershed bands in 1837.

The Black River and Swan Creek Chippewa Bands

The government first desired the prime farmlands held by the Black River and Swan Creek bands that were being most rapidly settled by Euro-Americans during the 1830's. Their lands were also valuable because of the standing timber on them. In 1834, the Swan Creek and Black River Bands ceded their lands to the United States in exchange for goods, services, and smaller tracts in somewhat more remote locations in Michigan. However since the removal policy was in full effect, American authorities could not allow new reservations in an organized territory (Clifton, 1992). The tribes thus ceded all the small reservation land in Michigan, which totaled 8,320 acres. Many of the tribal members resettled in Kansas, with the remaining roaming through ceded Michigan land.

The Saginaw River Bands

While the Saginaw River Bands did not sign any treaties with the government, they felt the pressure to sign treaties. As Detroit's population expanded, many of the farmers in the areas north of Detroit found the Chippewa were stealing their cattle and crops. However, many farmers were opposed to the removal of the Chippewa because of the business they were conducting with them. The reservations along the Saginaw River, which could provide waterpower sites and lumbering, were very important because of their geographic location. The government offered the Saginaws relocation in Kansas, but they this and later offers. Like many tribes in northern Michigan and Wisconsin, they remained in place geographically (Clifton, 1992).

However, in 1852 the first permanent white settlers where occurring in Isabella County. David Ward, Hursh and hunting grounds originally, but did not live there on a permanent John Fraser came up the Chippewa River and staked claim in 1852 to several parcels of pine

timberland, something Isabella County was plentiful with. David Ward staked more claims in 1855 based on the Graduation Act, which disposed of government land at fifty cents an acre. This act subsequently increased settlement in territories such as Michigan (Minyard, 2002). In 1855, a treaty was also enacted in which to detribalize Indian groups and eliminate collective reservations (Clifton, 1992).

The 1855 Saginaw Treaty (1855)

The 1855 Saginaw Treaty was the final land cession treaty. This treaty was primarily the Saginaw Chippewa Indians who exercised claims on land within the state of Michigan prior to the enactment of the other treaties. The Swan Creek and Black River parties were also the signatories to this treaty. The negotiator of this treaty Colonel Manypenny, whom had previous experience with Indian treaties.

After much deliberation the United States gave the Saginaw \$500,000 for their reservation land and promised the tribe unsold public land in Michigan. Manypenny was successful in joining both the Swan Creek and Black River groups with the Saginaw Chippewa in one treaty (Clifton,

1992). The first tract of unsold public land was in six adjoining townships in Isabella County. The Saginaws were granted the right to select which six townships they wanted, within the three months of signing the treaty (Clifton, 1992). The tribe chose the townships of Wise, Denver, Isabella, Nottawa, Deerfield, and the northern half of Union and Chippewa (Minyard, 2002). There was a second tract set aside for those who preferred to remain alongside the west shore of Saginaw Bay "Townships Nos. 17 and 18 north, ranges 3,4 and 5 east," rather than living in the interior. The government designed acres of swampland unsuitable for living as "unsold public lands". The Saginaw petitioned the U.S. Senate for a "larger range than six townships" from which to make their selections (Clifton, 1992).

The premise of the 1855 treaty was to finalize the Indian issue in Michigan once and for all (Pittman and Covington, 1992). Civilizing the Indians and establishing reservations were key aspects of this treaty. The Saginaw River, Swan Creek, and Black River Chippewa were conglomerated into one tribe. Most of the other tribal members of the Chippewa moved west along the Trail of Tears (a.k.a The Trail of Death).

A Methodist minister, George Smith wrote to George Manypenny in 1854 stating that the only way to save the Indians was to colonize them. The missionaries wanted to move the Indians to Isabella County to get them far away from white settlements. Thus Methodist missionaries possibly began the chain of events that led to the creation of the Isabella Indian Reservation (Minyard, 2002). The 1855 treaty established the reservation and began the "civilization" process. The Chippewa of Saginaw were awarded gristmill (Pittman and Covington, 1992). The state of Michigan was trying to make these tribes into farmers. The treaty also granted the head of each Chippewa family eighty acres of land. Each single person over twenty-one of age received forty acres. Each family of orphan children under that age and consisting of two or more persons eighty acres of land (Pittman and Covington, 1992). These allotments could not be sold for ten years.

Once the 1855 treaty was ratified in June 1856, some of the Saginaws began making selections on their lots. Mainly these early arrivals seem to have been from the Methodist missions.

Essentially the 1855 treaty abruptly terminated the Saginaws' tribal relationships and their collective

ownership of land. Everyone now had individual land holdings that they could eventually sell after 10 years. Many Saginaws wanted to reside in other places. Many of the Indians did not like the Isabella or Saginaw Bay locations (Clifton, 1992). Their crops were failing due to frosts or poor land. Many shifted to the lumber industry selling their surplus timber. Thus, they sold their allotment land for personal property. From this treaty, the total landmass of the six townships equaled 138,340 acres; however, only 98,114.32 were available for selection or allotment by the Saginaw tribe (see Table 1) (Clifton, 1992). The other 40,125.68 acres fell into state hands for schools, swampland development.

The Treaty of 1864

Of the 98,114.32 acres set aside for the Saginaw, only about 27,931 acres or 28 percent of this land had been selected as individual and family property (Clifton, 1992). The tribe at Saginaw Bay was very frustrated by the land at Saginaw Bay which they relinquished and moved to the Isabella Reservation to take the unselected allotments. The treaty also terminated the "tribal organization" of the Saginaws (Clifton, 1992). Congress

also did not authorize any reestablishment of a "Saginaw Tribe". The treaty of 1864 can best be seen as an amendment of their 1855 agreement dealing mainly with additional individual allotments. Amendment of their 1855 agreement dealing mainly with additional individual allotments.

			Acres
Total Area-Six Townships			138,240.00
Lands Sold per 1855 treaty			
Cash, Scrip, etc., entries/sales			17,413.83
Railroad Selections			4,480.00
Swamp Lands Passed to State			14,601.41
Canal Lands Passed to State			3,630.44
Lands Available for Selection for Saginaw Individuals and Families			98,114.32

Table 1: Lands Sold by the Saginaw Chippewa

Source: James A. Clifton

Loss of Individual Saginaw Chippewa Land Holdings

The Treaty of 1864 also required the local Indian agent to place Indians into one of two classes,

"competent" or "incompetent". "Competent" was defined as, those who were intelligent and had sufficient education, and were qualified by business habit to prudently manage their own affairs (Minyard, 2002).

"Incompetent" was defined as those who were uneducated or unqualified in other respects to prudently manage their affairs, who are "idle, wandering, or dissolute", and all orphans (Minyard, 2002). The "Incompetents" were granted fee simple patents. Fee simple is the strongest land possession right an individual can have. It also means that the owner has all rights to the land with no encumbrances (Minyard, 2002). This designation also meant that people could easily sell their land to outsiders.

Given the land's timber value, timber speculators began to buy the rights. As 40 acres of pineland would yield 560,000 board feet of lumber, and timber was selling between 1870 and 1900 at \$10-15 per thousand board feet. A 40-acre tract could be valued at \$5,600. The selling of land mainly throughout the latter portions of the 1800's. Whether it was to sell off land to pay debts or through swindling, the Saginaw Chippewa lost thousands of acres (Minyard, 2002). By 1899, the Saginaw Chippewa owned less than 3,000 acres of the approximately

100,000 original acres available for Indian allotments and purchase (Minyard, 2002). By the twentieth century the Saginaw were without a tribe and with little land left.

Recreating the Saginaw Chippewa Reservation

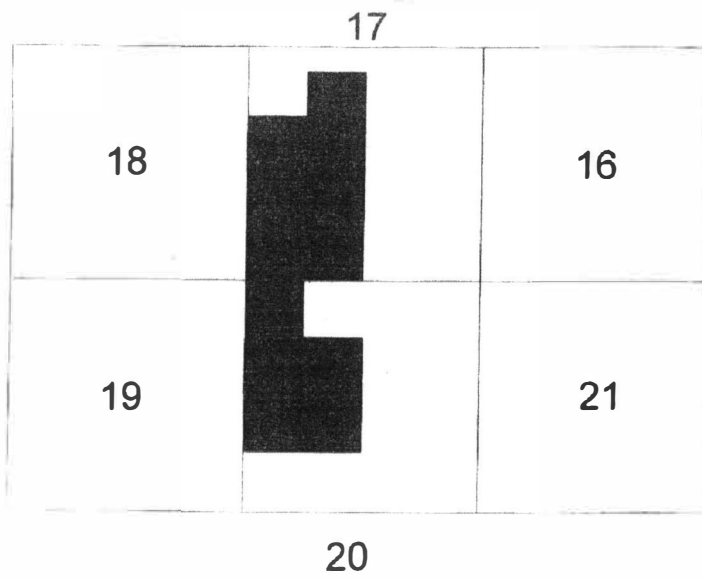
The 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act helped the Saginaw Chippewa to recreate tribal identity and the reservation. It reshaped Indian policy through the work of John Collier (Clifton, 1992). John Collier's vision for the Native American was to live in a politically segregated, self-governing communal society, with property owned in common, following more traditional lifestyles. This act ended the century-old policy of incorporating Indians into mainstream American life, disbanding tribal political entities, and eliminating collectively owned reservations. It also promoted "tribalism" in which existing Indian lands and properties were to be consolidated under common "tribal" ownership, even individually held trust allotments (Clifton, 1992). So, if a family had individual allotted land their it could be sold unless the tribe allowed the sale.

By 1933 the Isabella reservation that Collier viewed had shrunk to a fraction of its original size. Through Indian land sales, the City of Mt. Pleasant, acquired much of the reservation. By 1975, the reservation consisted of 1,223 acres, with 506 acres of tribal land and 717 acres of allotted (private) land (Clifton, 1992). When driving through Mt. Pleasant or Isabella County, one can still see the boundary markers of the original Isabella reservation. The boundaries of the original Indian community do not reflect as the reservation proper, since much has long since passed into other ownership. The land holdings are small and scattered widely over six townships (Clifton, 1992). Thus, even though the Saginaw were left with little land, under the Indian Reorganization Act, they were once again identified as a tribe in 1934.

Indian Gaming and the Soaring Eagle Casino

During the first half of the 20th century, the Saginaw Chippewa experienced blight, depression, and unemployment, common to many Native American tribes. From 1955 to 1983, no land loss occurred (Figure 1); but no land was bought back. In the 1985 the tribe opened the

Soaring Eagle bingo hall that employed 20 people. This early casino existed in the shadow of state law against the state's right to regulate Indian gaming. In 1987 the United States Supreme Court, in two separate rulings, made clear that Indian nations had broad rights to engage in gaming activities on reservation land. After the Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) of 1988, the tribe then decided to get into high-stakes casino gaming. In 1993 the tribe passed state legislation to partake in class III gaming or high stakes gaming. In 1993, the State of Michigan allowed the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe along with six others to conduct high-stakes gaming operations on their reservations. By 1995, the tribe opened the Soaring Eagle Casino, Michigan's only four-star casino. Since the 1993 birth of the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, the Saginaw Chippewa in Isabella County have reacquired power and land. The following chapter will look at how the casino has changed the Saginaw Chippewa, Isabella County, and Mt. Pleasant.



Indian Land, 1955- 1983 Plat Book

Figure 1: Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Land

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

CHAPTER IV

THE SAGINAW CHIPPEWA CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE IN ISABELLA COUNTY

The Soaring Eagle Casino has in certain ways improved life for the Saginaw Chippewa tribe and non-native people in the surrounding area. Establishing power and self-reliance through the casino are only a few ways in which gaming on the Isabella Reservation has revitalized the tribe and its members.

This chapter will begin with how Native American Indian tribes in general became involved in gaming. Then it will look at involvement in gaming by Native Americans in Michigan and in particular, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe. Next, this chapter describes the introduction of the high-stakes casino operation at Soaring Eagle, which opened in 1993. After detailing the development of the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, this chapter will shift to how the Saginaw Chippewas have socially produced space and inscribed their tribal identity on Isabella County. Probably the most important aspect of the casino has been how it has financially enabled the tribe to reacquire lost tribal land or other

land that was in private ownership. The tribe is also inscribing tribal identity on the landscape through reservation signage. Additionally the Saginaw Chippewa have used their casino revenue additionally to fund development for subdivisions for single-family tribal members. It has developed and established the Elijah Elk and the Ziibiwing cultural centers. The tribes thus have established a strong cultural presence on the reservation and in Isabella County. The tribe is also creating a social services department for tribal members. The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe had limited social services for many years. Finally through gaming revenues, the tribe is fostering a positive relationship with the City of Mount Pleasant and local municipalities around Isabella County. Not only are the casino's revenues changing the way Native Americans live on reservations, but they are also impacting the surrounding areas. Non-Native American communities are benefiting from the introduction of gaming.

Indian Gaming

Gaming began on Indian reservations in 1974 (Smith, 1994). At that time, the Seminole tribe of Florida began

operating bingo games on their reservation. In 1987, the United States Supreme Court, in two different court rulings, made it clear that Indian Nations had broad rights to engage in gaming activities on reservation land. In the first ruling, the court held that the Seminole could engage in "high stakes" bingo games with jackpots up to \$10,000, despite a Florida state law outlawing any bingo game payments greater than \$100. In a second, more substantive rule, the court held that the small Cabazon tribe of California was entitled to operate on reservation land, "any and all gaming activities that the state of California authorized in any form" (Hogen, 1988). This ruling was very significant as California and most other states allowed charitable organizations such as churches to hold "Las Vegas" nights in which casino style gaming of some sort was allowed. However, state laws controlled this charitable gambling with a variety of regulations. As a result of these laws and this ruling, the court held that tribal governments could sponsor similar events in casinos on reservation land, John but without the same level of state regulation (Hogen, 1988).

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988

Both of the Supreme Court rulings caused great legal turmoil in 1988, Congress acted to create a structured program to regulate the relationship between state gaming regulations and Indian gaming activities (Hogen, 1988). The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) simplified the relationship between the state authorities and Indian casinos by defining classes of gambling. The IGRA classified gambling into three categories. Class I gaming included the regulation of "social" games conducted for prizes of minimum value, such as bingo and card games where each player plays against each other rather than against "the house". Class II gaming involved the use of electronic gaming devices for bingo. Finally, class III gaming involved the use of electronic gaming devices for high-stakes "games of chance" and high stakes card games (Hogen, 1988).

Michigan Compact Negotiations

In 1988 the Native American tribes of Michigan that were operating casinos prior to the 1988 IGRA started

negotiations with the state of Michigan to draft the compact required by the IGRA. However, the negotiations came to a standstill because the state was adamantly opposed to video gambling. The tribes favored the video devices (Hogen, 1988). For several years the negotiations ceased. The casinos, however, continued to stay open despite the lack of a compact. The United States Department of Justice made the operation legal by allowing existing casinos to operate while compact negotiations were "underway". The government however did not establish any milestones to judge the progress of "underway" negotiations, nor did they create a date by which "underway" negotiations were completed (Hogen, 1988).

In April 1993, a Michigan appellate court decision made it clear that the state courts were not likely to uphold the state's longstanding opposition to "video games of chance" on Indian reservations. This finding was largely due to Indian reservations being sovereign nations, or viewed as nations within nations. The state and all of the tribes finally came together to form a compact in late summer of 1993 (Smith, 1994).

The compact stipulated that tribal governments were given the right by the state to operate casinos both on

and off the reservations along with the privilege of using video games of chance (Smith, 1994). However, in return the tribes would pay ten percent of all profits from the machines to the government. Eight of the ten percent went to the Michigan Strategic Fund. The Michigan Strategic Fund was created to help diversify Michigan's economy and to provide for economic development, primarily by assisting business enterprises in obtaining additional sources of financing. The remaining two percent was reserved for the local governments in the communities where the casinos operated. Interestingly, the compact stated that should the state allow non-Indian owned casinos to operate, the tribes would no longer have to make payments to the Michigan Strategic Fund (Office of the Auditor General, 2002).

Detroit Casinos

The opportunity for tribes to operate casinos outside federally defined reservations created substantial opposition. In particular Detroit legislators who originally opposed casino gambling in their own city attempted, but failed to block, the

compact between the state and the tribes. Originally in 1988 voters in Detroit rejected casino gambling in their city; however, in 1994 the voters had a different opinion on gaming in the "Motor City." The voters of Detroit passed a referendum allowing an Indian owned and operated Casino within the city limits. However, in 1996 the voters yet again changed the landscape of gaming in Michigan. The voters authorized three casinos within the city limits to be run by any group of investors who made the best offer for the licenses. Passing this decision would prove costly for the state of Michigan. This casino violated the select article found in the 1993 State Compact. If a casino was ever operated by non-Indian entities, then tribes could legally withhold their payments to the Michigan Strategic Fund, although they would still have to continue to make payments to the local units of governments (Smith, 1994).

Isabella County Prior to 1993

Prior to the development of the Soaring Eagle Casino in 1993, Isabella County's economy centered around four major components: Central Michigan University, regional retail shopping, agriculture, and oil. Central Michigan

University enrolled approximately 23,000, and employed around 2,500 people. The City of Mount Pleasant, the county seat and the largest city in Isabella County (population 25,000), is home to Central Michigan University and is the regional shopping area for the "mid-Michigan". Not many people know that Michigan had a viable source of oil in the early 1920's. In fact Mount Pleasant was categorized as Michigan's "oil capital". In the 1920's, 1970's, and the early 1980's, oil and natural gas fields fueled the economic growth of Isabella County. As in many areas of the country, agricultural employment in Isabella County has declined, but it still produced feed corn and soybeans. As of 1992, Isabella County's tax base was 53% residential, 18% commercial, 15% agricultural, 1% industrial, and 13% "other" (Office of the Auditor General, 2002).

Prior to 1993, the Saginaw Chippewa tribe was not even listed among the leading employers of the county. But with the opening of the Soaring Eagle Casino, this gaming facility ranked second only to Central Michigan University in the number of employees. With the opening of the entertainment complex in 1996, it surpassed Central Michigan University to become the largest employer in Isabella County (Harrold, 2000).

Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort

The Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort is Michigan's only four-diamond casino and resort. The resort boasts five acres of gambling, including 4,700 slot machines and 55 gaming tables for blackjack, poker, roulette and craps. The casino also has a five-floor hotel with 512 rooms. The entertainment complex has held some very notable entertainers in the past such as Chicago, Clint Black, Ray Charles, and Loretta Lynn. Recent shows included George Carlin and Ashanti (Figure 2). The casino, which employs 3,700 people, attracts an average 12,000 to 15,000 people a day with more in the summer (Sutherly, 2003). Figures 3 and 4 show the sign and entrance to the casino.



Figure 2: George Carlin Picture

Source: Author



Figure 3: Entrance When Driving into the Soaring Eagle Casino Complex

Source: Author



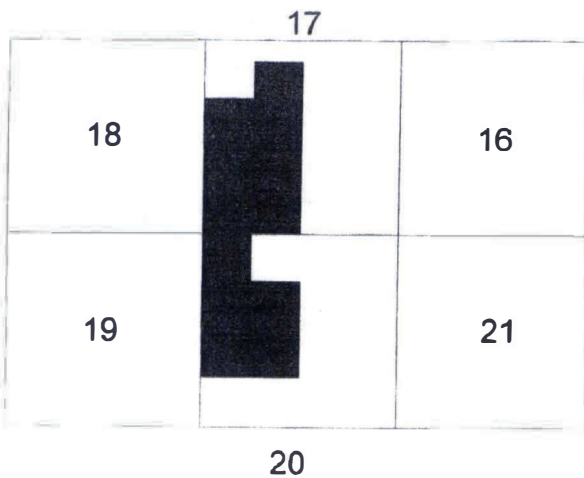
Figure 4: Entrance of the Soaring Eagle Casino

Source: Author

Reacquiring Former Tribal Land

As discussed in former chapters, the tribe has lost thousands of acres of their reservation either through

tax sales or sales of privately held land by tribal members. However, with the introduction of the Soaring Eagle Casino, the tribe has now been able to use revenue generated by the casino to buy former tribal land back as well as other properties. From 1955 to 1983, the tribal land was reduced by sections 17 and 20 in Union Township (Figure 5).



Indian Land, 1955- 1983 Plat Book

Figure 5: Tribal Land in Union Township from (1955-1983)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

The tribe quickly began purchasing land after the inception of the Soaring Eagle Bingo Hall in 1985. Shortly after the opening of the casino, the next year

the tribe began buying land in small increments.

Examining the 1986 plat book (Figure 6), the tribe bought land in S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 20.

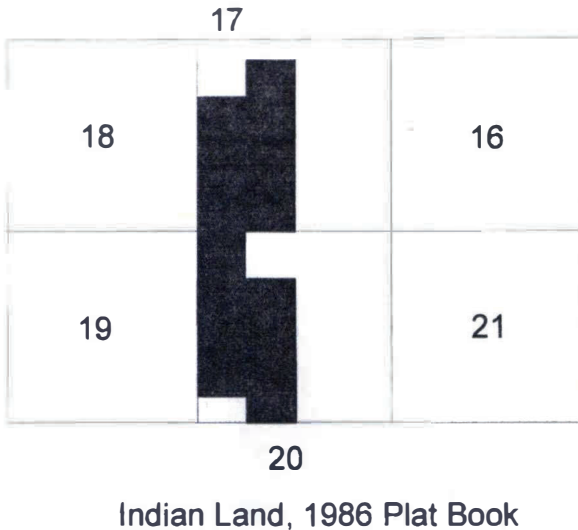


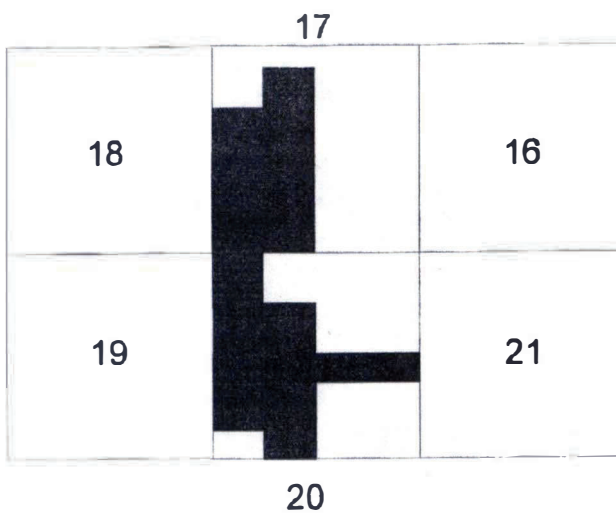
Figure 6: Tribal Land in Union Township (1986)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

After 1986, the tribe was not done purchasing land and turning it into tribally owned land. All land purchased by the tribe is turned over at some point, to the Bureau of Indian Affairs where it is held in trust as Tribal Trust Land. This land cannot be sold by any individual within the tribe. Any family or individual within the tribe can buy land from the tribe, but it is

always held by the tribe. The only way the tribe can sell land if there is a unanimous vote by all tribal members.

Examining the 1989 plat book (Figure 7), the tribe again bought more land. A long strip of land in the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 20.



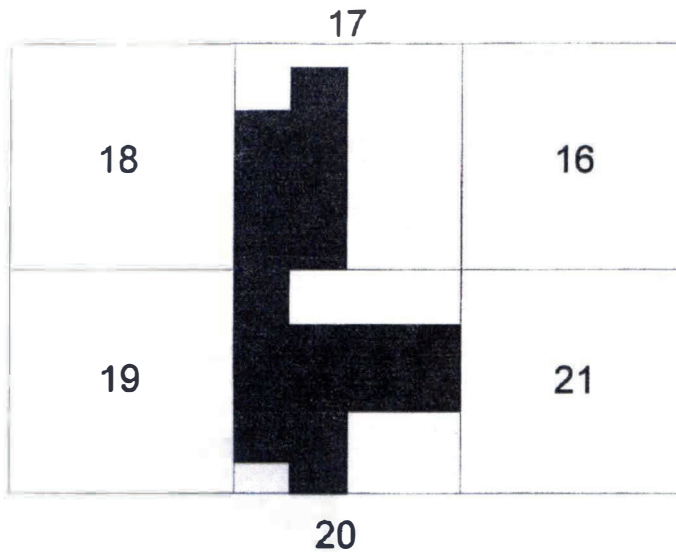
Indian Land, 1989 Plat Book

Figure 7: Tribal Land in Union Township (1989)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

The tribe was steadily buying small tracts of land. However the tribally owned land did not exceed the boundaries of section 17 or 20.

Examining the 1992 plat map (Figure 8), the tribe added more land to their 1989 purchases. While the tribe had some very significant land purchases, they did not compare to the purchases the tribe made in future years.



Indian Land, 1992 Plat Book

Figure 8: Tribal Land in Union Township (1992)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

Examining the 1994 plat book (Figure 9), the tribe dramatically increased tribal lands into other sections than 17 and 20. The tribe purchased land in section 16, 18, and 19. The purchases of lands after 1993 are very significant because they were larger parcels. The

Soaring Eagle Casino established in 1993 made this all possible. The Soaring Eagle Casino was generating more revenue for the tribe than the Soaring Eagle Bingo Hall, thus making it possible for the tribe to acquire more land.

Examining the 1997 plat map (Figure 10), the amount of land acquired was not as significant as in the 1994 update, but they were finally able to gain access to section 21. Again examining the 2000 plat book (Figure 11), the tribe purchased more land in section 17.

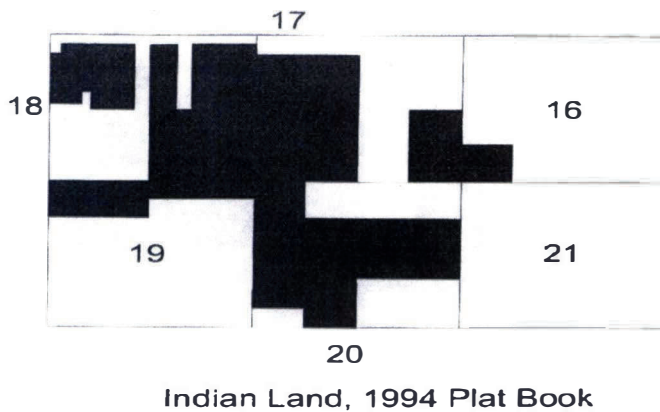


Figure 9: Tribal Land in Union Township (1994)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

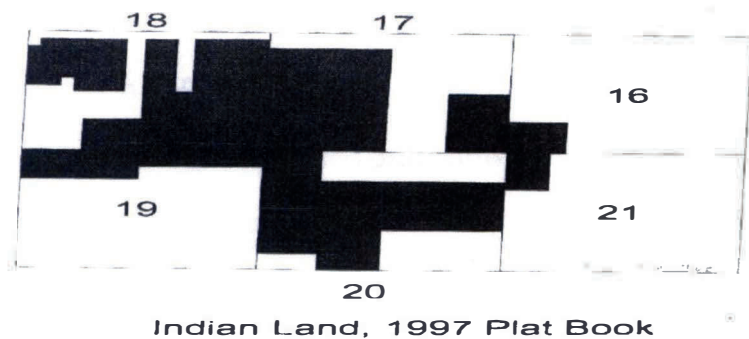


Figure 10: Tribal Land in Union Township (1997)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

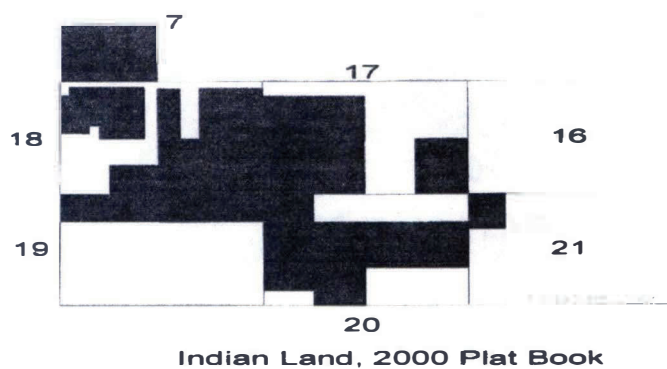


Figure 11: Tribal land in Union Township (2000)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

Again examining the 2000 plat book (Figure 11), the tribe purchased more land in section 17. The final plat

map examined was the 2003 version. With the 2003 version (Figure 12), the tribe purchased land in section 13 and 16 two sections where the tribe hadn't previously made purchases.

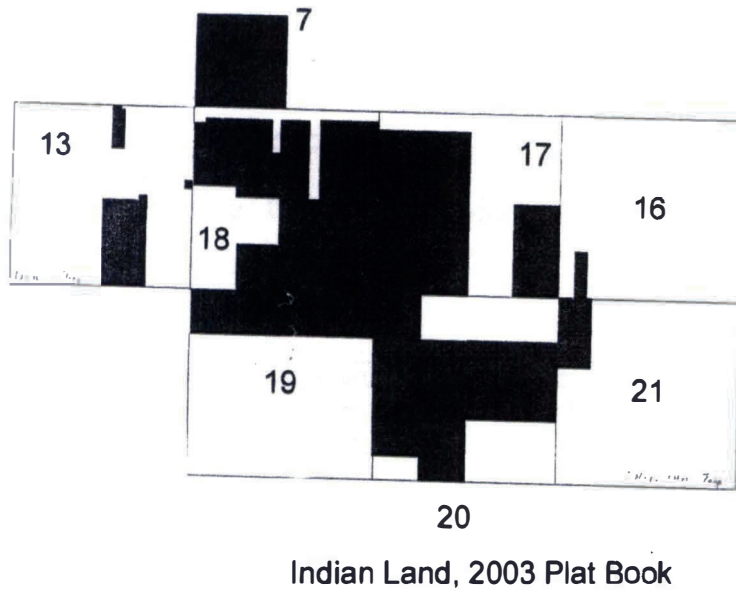


Figure 12: Tribal Land in Union Township (2003)

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

In all, the tribe purchased land in eight sections of Union Township, which totaled 1185 acres (Table 2). Without the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, none of these purchases would have been possible. Today

reservation tribal land is made up of retained tribal land, reacquired formal tribal land, and land outside of the original reservation. The Saginaw Chippewa are one of the few Native American tribes that have actually added land to their reservation. In contrast, most tribes have lost land in the past and have never regained that land back. The Soaring Eagle Casino has been a viable tool for the Saginaw Chippewa to purchase land and will continue to facilitate future land acquisition (Table 2).

Land Acquired by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan	
All land is an estimate	
1986	50 acres
1989	30 acres
1992	80 acres
1994	700 acres
1997	60 acres
2000	160 acres
2003	105 acres
Estimated total land acquired:	1185 acres

Table 2: Estimates of Land Acquired by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan

Source: Wayne E. Kiefer

Two Percent Distribution to Local Municipalities

"We think the casino has been very good for the city,"-Paul Preston Jr., Mt. Pleasant City Manager

"They pay a lot of money to the community,"-Annette Donley, Long time Mt. Pleasant resident, (Sutherly, 2003).

Since 1994, the tribe has semi-annually given local municipalities two percent of Soaring Eagle's total revenue. Each Michigan tribe operating a casino is required to make payments to local municipalities. The payment amounts are calculated based on the total "net win" from electronic games of chance for each tribe (gross slot machine revenue less payments to players for winning wagers) (Office of the Auditor General, 2002). Each local government is to receive "no less than its share of property taxes that would otherwise be attributed to the class III gaming facility if that site were subject to such taxation" (Smith, 1994). The first payment made by the tribe to the municipalities is from December 1 through March 31. The second is from April 1 through August 31. Local governments can use the funds to improve infrastructure, bolster their public safety departments, improve the city any way the city officials

deem fit, and to offset costs and impacts associated with the tribe's gaming operations on local government.

In 1994, local municipalities in Isabella County received their first casino payments. Isabella County received \$434,603, Chippewa Township \$37,286, and Nottawa Township \$5,974, respectively. The ways that Isabella County utilized its payments included: 1) drain improvements on Stacy Drain #575, Granger #346, Richmond #536, and Ervin property; 2) Central dispatch for 911 services (\$7,236); 3) county inmate housing (\$15,000); 4) a material resource facility "tipping fee" (\$1,000); 5) a transportation study for Broadway Road and Leaton Road intersection improvements (\$100,000); 6) Saginaw Chippewa alternative education programs (\$50,000); and 7) Isabella County police mobile data terminal proposal (\$136,367) (Harrold, 1994). In May 2000, the tribe also allocated \$30,626 to four school districts (Dargitz, 2000) (Table 3).

The City of Mt. Pleasant in 1998 also received casino funds. With them, it upgraded the computer system at a cost of \$200,000. It also provided \$300,000 for a new animal shelter and more than \$167,000 for Medical Care Facility improvements. In 1999 and 2000, the city spent \$1 million for an expansion of a wastewater

treatment plant and a \$2.5 million renovation city hall. In 2001, a \$4.5 million addition was made to the public safety building (Dargitz, 2000). The tribe's funds also helped Isabella County with \$11,300 for a mosquito survey and \$20,000 for a head lice program (Dargitz, 2000).

Mount Pleasant also used the funds for recreation. In 1999, it constructed a river walk trail through the city parks for \$300,000 and built an Island Park skateboard facility for \$150,000 (Dargitz, 2000). In 2000, the City of Mount Pleasant used its payment to lower the price for individuals and families to join its parks and recreations leagues. In the past, generally not all of the community was able to partake in the parks and recreation activities. Prior to the disbursement era, the city had higher participation fees to help balance its budget (Dargitz, 2000). However, with funds from the casino, the city was able to cut the prices in half.

Since 1994, the tribe has given \$62,410,903.06 to local municipalities, schools, townships, and community colleges.

The city of Mount Pleasant has received \$9,793,603.14 from the tribe since 1994 (Table 4).

The Spring 2004 Awards Recipients (amounts rounded to the nearest dollar):	
Distribution to Units of Local Government:	
Isabella/Gratiot RESD & Special Education	\$14,345
City of Mt. Pleasant	\$225,000
Isabella County	\$2,021,599
Deerfield Township	\$35,584
Denver Township	\$30,094
Isabella Township	\$30,094
Nottawa Township	\$30,094
Total Government Distributions:	\$2,446,998
Distribution to Schools	
Beal City Public Schools	\$115,941
Chipewa Hills Public Schools	\$22,950
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools	\$819,946
Shepard Public Schools	\$322,259
Total School Distributions:	\$1,281,096
Total May 2004 Distributions:	\$3,728,094

Table 3: 2% Distribution of Spring 2004 Funds

Source: Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan (2004)

Isabella County	\$3,910,707.38
Isabella Gratiot RESD	\$200,825.22
City of Mt. Pleasant	\$9,793,603.14
Cultural & Recreation Committee	\$500,000.00
Village of Shepard	\$877,190.00
Shepard Tri Township Fire Department	\$718,000.00
Chippewa Township	\$1,130,699.85
Coe Township	\$449,487.03
Deerfield Township	\$549,616.42
Denver Township	\$1,162,001.41
Fremont Township	\$39,580.00
Gilmore Township	\$30,000.00
Isabella Township	\$631,487.98
Nottawa Township	\$880,597.77
Rolland Township	\$177,000.00
Sherman Township	\$908,039.03
Vernon Township	\$12,500.00
Wise Township	\$907,155.80
City of Standish	\$243,175.00
Arenac County	\$540,197.00
Standish Township Arenac County	\$611,155.50
Lincoln Township Arenac County	\$36,116.48
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools	\$5,752,293.45
State Education Taxes	\$395,259.92
School Debt	\$281,184.15
Resv for taxes	\$110,000.00
Shepard Public Schools	\$1,544,920.30
Chippewa Hills Schools	\$367,379.07
Beal City Public Schools	\$527,870.86
Reallocation	\$29,289.91
Saganing Property	\$96,000.00
Mid-Michigan Comm. College	\$200,000.00
Grand Total:	\$62,410,903.06

Table 4: 2004 2% Distribution of Funds

Source: Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan (2004)

Single-Family Residential Unit Development

The prototypical housing unit for many reservation Indians are sometimes mobile or prefabricated homes (Figure 13). On the Isabella Indian reservation, many Indians lived in similar government subsidized homes or trailers. However, since the inception of the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, the tribe has started its own Planning Department which most Indian reservations do not have. As a result, other reservations have sporadic development and unplanned mixed uses. The Saginaw Chippewa Planning Department, which is located in the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribal government offices, develops and plans where homes and businesses should be located (Figure 14). The tribe's Fire and Police Departments are both located near the tribal government offices (Figures 15 and 16). Other than the Soaring Eagle Casino, the tribe also owns a Shell gas station with an A&W fast-food restaurant located right next to the casino (Figure 17).



Figure 13: Rosebud Indian Reservation Home

Source: Author



Figure 14: Saginaw Chippewa Government Offices

Source: Author

The Planning Department also developed the Little Elk Estates housing subdivision (Figure 18). The Little Elk Estates housing development contains large lots with new single-family homes available to any member of the tribe. There are a variety of homes available in Little Elk Estates, from three-story to one-story homes. Figures 19, 20, and 21 show the diversity of homes available to any tribal member.



Figure 15: Tribal Fire Department

Source: Author



Figure 16: Tribal Police Department

Source: Author



Figure 17: Tribal Shell Station with A&W Restaurant

Source: Author



Figure 18: Little Elk Estates Sign

Source: Author



Figure 19: Three-Story Home

Source: Author



Figure 20: Two-Story Home

Source: Author



Figure 21: One-Story Home

Source: Author

Without the financial revenues from the Soaring Eagle Casino, the Little Elk Estates would not have come to fruition. What makes the Little Elk Estates so

important is that their diverse selections of houses are only available to tribal members. In a sense the Little Elk Estates is a mixed-income development, which incorporates all economic backgrounds and family sizes of tribal members.

The Ziibiwing and Elijah Elk Cultural Centers

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe currently has two cultural centers, the Elijah Elk Cultural Center and the Ziibiwing Cultural Center (Figures 22 and 23). The Elijah Elk Cultural Center was designed to provide community access to Indian spiritual traditions. Sponsored programs foster unity, understanding and harmony among community members. They also promote a closer relationship with the Great Spirit through hands-on community and individual spiritual development. Finally they preserve the cultural, heritage, language and traditions of the Anishinaabe way of life so they can be passed on (Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe of Michigan, 2004). The Elijah Elk Cultural Center is primarily for tribal members to use, but is open to the public. More resources for tribal members are available here than at the Ziibiwing Cultural Center.



Figure 22: Elijah Elk Cultural Center

Source: Author



Figure 23: Ziibiwing Cultural Center

Source: Author

For many years the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe used the Elijah Elk Cultural Center for their tribal museum and for their cultural events, but the Ziibiwing Cultural Center has now taken over many of those functions. With the opening of the Soaring Eagle Casino, the tribe had the ability to open this massive cultural center which exhibited to the public the Saginaw Chippewa culture and history. The Ziibiwing Cultural Center, is more accessible than the Elijah Elk Center. As it is located next to the Soaring Eagle Casino, it gives casino patrons the opportunity to take a break from gaming and enjoy the Cultural Center. The Ziibiwing Center is described as, "a distinctive treasure created to provide an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience, which promotes the society's belief that the culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek must be recognized, perpetuated, communicated and supported" (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, 2004). The center provides a research center, a 1,640 square foot changing exhibit gallery, a permanent exhibit gallery, and a café.

The Soaring Eagle Casino has enabled the tribe and visitors to truly appreciate tribal culture through the Ziibiwing Cultural Center. The Saginaw Chippewa now have an outlet to showcase their culture and lifestyle; many patrons to the Soaring Eagle Casino can now understand the people who run the casino. Around 100-150 people a day visit the Cultural Center. The majority are local school children. The Cultural Center increases public understanding that this tribe is more than the casino.

Social Services Provided by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe has been able to direct a large portion of their revenue from the Soaring Eagle Casino to social services provided to tribal members. The Saginaw Chippewa tribe has adopted "Helping our families" which was formerly named "Tribal Social Services". The Social Services Department adopted a philosophy in which works to preserve the Native family. The main goal of the tribal social services is to keep Native children in their natural environment (i.e. the Saginaw Chippewa community). "Families First Program's" main premise is that even the very "troubled" families can learn to protect and care for their children. The

program provides four weeks of intensive therapy to Native families in their home environment (Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan, 2004).

The Indian Child Welfare Program services under this program are available to tribal members who are at risk of having a child removed for placement or who are working toward reunification with a child who already is in foster care. The main premise of this program is to enable families to remain together by defusing crisis situations and connecting families with appropriate services and providers. The services include: parenting education, child development classes, family advocacy, individual and family counseling, and home maintenance skills (Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan, 2004).

The Saginaw Chippewa General Assistance Program is a response to the elimination of social programs by the state. The tribe provides monthly stipends to Saginaw Chippewa or local Native Americans who do not qualify for other state or federally-funded relief programs. The stipends are only provided until other assistance is obtained or employment is secured. An applicant must provide proof that they are actively engaged in seeking employment by providing a completed Employment Search Form biweekly (Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan, 2004).

However to qualify for the General Assistance Program, applicants must provide documentation of one (1/4) degree Native American blood. This must be in the form of a letter or a tribal membership card from a federally-recognized tribe. In addition, applicants must have established residence in Isabella or Arenac Counties (Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan, 2004). There is also a Senior Center which provides a place where the senior community can gather for meals and activities. It also provides a home for several seniors.

The Nimkee Memorial Wellness Clinic is also a service provided by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe on the Isabella Indian Reservation (Figure 24). The main goal of the clinic is to maximize the health and medical knowledge of Native Americans. The clinic offers a number of programs to prevent and treat diseases, as well as to promote long, healthy lifestyles. The facility also has a medical/ambulatory care clinic, dental clinic, and public health department. Community Health Services provide assistance in delivering medicines to elders, transport clients to appointments, and assist clients with nutrition. There is also a diabetes team, which aims to identify those who have diabetes as early as possible and to teach them how to manage their diabetes.

WIC, maternal/child health, and the Healthy Start program provide education and assistance to pregnant women, new mothers, and children. All are available free to Tribal members, or at cost to other Nimkee clients.

The tribe also has the Nimkee Dental clinic which is a full service, state-of-the-art dental facility. Two full time dentists, a full time hygienist and eight support staff are available to provide a full range of dental services. The tribe also has a pharmacy within the Nimkee Wellness Center in which anyone who sees a physician at Nimkee can have their prescriptions filled there. Finally, the tribe also has a state-of-the-art fitness facility in which all tribal members are encouraged to partake.



Figure 24: Nimkee Memorial Wellness Clinic

Source: Author

To be eligible for services within the clinic, you must be a member of a federally recognized tribe or be a direct descendant of one. An application, with proof of membership included, needs to be completed. Unless however you are from the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, you must live within the five county service districts: Isabella, Clare, Midland, Arenac and Missaukee counties (Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan, 2004). For Saginaw Chippewa tribal members, free health care is provided. The Saginaw Chippewa however do have extensive social services, primarily due to the Soaring Eagle Casino.

Along with health services the tribe also gives each adult member \$1,500 a week, or \$78,000 a year, from casino proceeds. Those under 18 get an Indian child welfare payment that is about a fourth of that amount (Southerly, 2003). The Soaring Eagle Casino has brought free health care and a large stipend to all tribal members.

Tribal Signage throughout Isabella County

Whether it is through a personal name or a cultural name, street signage is an overlooked aspect of space and place. In the U.S. South, naming streets after Martin

Luther King is an important tool for African-Americans to rewrite the landscape of Southern identity and commemoration (Alderman, 2000).

Likewise Native American street signage in Isabella County also is an important way for the Saginaw Chippewa to rewrite the landscape. Any visitor to Isabella County or Mt. Pleasant will find several boundary signs scattered on various roadsides (Figure 25). The signs indicate the original Isabella Indian Reservation boundary. In 2000, the tribe installed 38 reservation signs and paid for all installation cost along the primary roads of the reservation boundaries. The signs were put up by the tribe to inform drivers that they are entering the Isabella Reservation and to potentially help ensure their safety (Dargitz, 2000).



Figure 25: Isabella Indian Reservation Boundary Sign

Source: Author

The signage is used to ensure drivers' safety because it lets people know that tribal police has jurisdiction in those areas. Usually when people see tribal police in areas outside of the casino, people question why the tribal police are patrolling the townships. While most of the land located within these boundary signs is no longer Saginaw Chippewa land, the presence of the original Isabella Reservation still lingers. The tribe is still buying more land within these "original" boundaries of the Isabella Indian Reservation. So even though some land within the boundaries of the old reservation have not been obtained, other parcels of land have been (Dargitz, 2000).

The casino revenue that has enabled the tribe to acquire land has also given the Saginaw Chippewa the ability to construct new residential developments for its tribal members. Since the tribe owns and has developed the land, they have all the right to name the streets as they choose. The picture below (Figure 26) depicts the entrance road into the aforementioned Little Elk Estates. The streets have culturally relevant names. For instance, the term "Moccasin", which generally means shoe for Native Americans, is the name of the street leading into the Saginaw Chippewa development.



Figure 26: Moccasin Street

Source: Author

"Sweetgrass Drive" (Figure 27) can also be found in this development. Sweetgrass (*Hierochloe odorata*) is very important in Native American rituals. Other street names in the development include "Little Elk Drive" and "East Sage Drive".



Figure 27: Sweetgrass Drive

Source: Author

Signage is yet another example on how the Saginaw Chippewa are changing the physical landscape of Isabella County. This signage incorporates Native American cultural names into Mount Pleasant that were previously not found there. In this way, the Saginaw Chippewa are changing the cultural landscape of Isabella County.

This chapter focused on how the Soaring Eagle Casino has greatly affected the Saginaw Chippewa and Isabella County. Through the casino, the tribe is changing the physical and social landscape of Isabella County. In the next chapter, I will discuss conclusions and further research directions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Saginaw Chippewa and Isabella County

Indian gaming has provided a source of revenue for many tribes across the nation. Some tribes like the Pequot of Connecticut have been very prosperous with a casino, while some tribes like the Navajo have decided not to enter into gaming. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe of Michigan decided to partake in the gaming industry, which has proven to be a viable source of revenue for the tribe and a source of stability for the region. Not only has gaming provided a sense of economic development for the tribe and their tribal members, it has shifted power and respect back to the Saginaw Chippewa in Isabella County.

With the inception of high-stakes gaming in Michigan in the early 1990's, Michigan's Native American tribes have had the opportunity to develop a previously unavailable source of revenue. The Saginaw Chippewa have taken advantage of the opportunity to establish a casino on their land. With the loss of thousands of acres of

reservation land over time through governmental tax sales or sales to timber speculators, the Isabella Indian reservation was reduced to less than 500 acres. With casino revenues, the tribe has been able to address its land losses along with providing resources to local municipalities around Isabella County.

By analyzing the plat maps, I have shown the tribe has greatly increased its reservation size from 480 acres in 1983 to 1665 acres in 2003. Using revenues from the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, the tribe was able to purchase either lost tribal land or other private land and add it to the Isabella Indian reservation. Many tribes across the country have a very difficult time acquiring new parcels or former tribal land. The Saginaw Chippewa are a tribe which now have the power to acquire land back. The tribe is also changing the surrounding municipalities in Isabella County through 2% "netwin" semi-annual payments. The tribe has also constructed single-family residential subdivisions. The development is filled with mixed style housing which is available to all tribal members. The tribe has also enhanced its cultural representation in Isabella County. The Ziibiwing Cultural Center is a state of the art museum that displays the cultural history of the Saginaw

Chippewa. The tribe has also installed social services programs and health care for the tribal members. The tribe has established signage throughout Isabella County, which also indicate its presence. This is all due to the Soaring Eagle Casino. The Soaring Eagle Casino has empowered the tribe to acquire land, status and power in Isabella County. The Saginaw Chippewas' position in the county is likely to grow in the future.

The Saginaw Chippewa experience with tourism differs from that of many other indigenous or aboriginal tribes. Unlike the Saginaw Chippewa which use funds generated by casino tourism to acquire land, the Han of the Yukon and the Inuvialuit of the Arctic who are located in very remote locations, used tourism revenues to support educational opportunities. The Inuvialuit in the Arctic region rarely saw many children finish high school. With the revenue from their environmental tourism activities, the tribe was able to provide important educational programs to keep students in school. The Han likewise used their revenue to establish a tribal community college that is free to all tribal members. While the Saginaw Chippewa have a tribal community college, their focus is to increase their land by acquiring more acreage since they have a small reservation. Unlike the Canadian

tribes which have larger reservations, reacquiring land for the reservation which shrunk from 139,000 in 1855 to 450 acres in 1983 is obviously more important to the Saginaw Chippewa.

The Saginaw Chippewa experience also differs from that of the aboriginal tribes of Australia. The latter have used environmental and cultural tourism proceeds to establish a hotel. The hotel produces a revenue and provides employment for tribal members. This keeps money within the tribe and provides a viable source of employment for tribal members. While the Saginaw Chippewa also have a hotel attached to the Soaring Eagle, the hotel is more of a revenue producer than a job source for their tribe. Since each tribal member receives \$1,500 a week in casino proceeds, many are not employed through the casino. At the Soaring Eagle resort Hotel and casino jobs are mainly held by non-tribal individuals. If members choose not to work, this may lead to societal problems over time.

Future research regarding casino-induced changes could involve investigating tribal politics. Since the Saginaw Chippewa are essentially made up of three different tribes, the Swan Creek, Black River, and Saginaw Bay Chippewa bands, it would be fascinating to

find out how these three tribes relate to each other and if those relations involve blacklisting and ejection from the tribe, especially now that casino payments total \$78,000 per year, per person.

Another interesting area for future study can involve the influence of the casino on Saginaw Chippewa youth. After the age of 18, each tribal member receives \$1500 weekly. How does this affect youth? Do the young Saginaw Chippewa aspire to move onto college or just collect their checks from the casino?

Other questions requiring future research include:

- 1) Is the land being acquired individual land or is it communal?;
- 2) How does the distribution of funds work?;
- 3) Does the casino benefit everyone equally in the tribe?;
- 4) What are the social impacts of the casino to the community and the tribe?;
- and 5) Is the revenue distribution system equitable?

For the past 200 years, Native people in the United States suffered land loss and genocide. Throughout this time the Native Americans have not had total control over their own destinies. One tribe, the Saginaw Chippewa, have been viewed as a societal burden, threat, and impediment to development by some Euro-Americans. However through Indian gaming, their situation appears to be

improving. The Saginaw Chippewa and other Native peoples might finally have the opportunity to achieve economic and social control. The Saginaw Chippewa have a sad history that is plagued with land loss. However, gaming may provide the Saginaw Chippewa, the opportunity to achieve economic and social control. The Saginaw Chippewa are quickly gaining power and respect back in Isabella County as a result of their successful Soaring Eagle Casino. The future looks bright for the Saginaw Chippewa and the people of Isabella County. The Saginaw Chippewa are driving change and improvements throughout Isabella County and Mount Pleasant.

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