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THE FUR TRADE AND FUR TRADERS OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

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by

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Picture in the mind's eye, a lonely wanderer trekking through the wilderness. All that this traveler can see is trees, surrounded by brambles and bushes. Sharp thorns may tear at his legs and arms. The pack he carries is heavy, and no matter what season of the year, he perspires heavily. This parcel is loaded with trade goods he must transport upon his back from place to place. This pack is full of materials that other humans want and will pay dearly for. This man is much like an Indian, in buckskins and wool. His main concern is to trade for furs which others want, and perhaps even kill for. This man, given many names, may have come from many countries by birth, but a commonality was that he was rugged by nature.

This is the romanticized vision of a fur trader that comes to mind as one thinks of Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett. However, in Kosciusko County, as well as in other areas, men were not always like the individual portrayed above. In fact many were money hungry individuals that thought that the "ends justified the means". They took much and gave little. This paper will deal with both such men. Moreover To fully understand the fur traders in Kosciusko County, an inspection of the history of the eastern portion of North America is needed. As much of what happened in Kosciusko County was determined not in this area, but often in far distant lands. This history and the political aspects go hand-in-hand. One such aspect deals with the red man and the various ways that he was effected by the trade. Another area that needs inspection is that of governmental intervention-be it American, British, or French. It also is important to see that the pioneer ethic did exist in the wilderness; yet to fully

understand the workings of the Indian Traders, we must look at the unsavory side too.

This era in history is often forgotten by modern society. If traders had not transversed the forests, if Indians had not had early contact with the white man, if furs were not valued so highly, the ramifications on history could and would have been very significant. We could easily have still been a colony of England. Through many unknown, and a few recognized figures, men wrought out history in this county and ones just like it, Kosciusko County was right in the middle of the scene of action from app. 1700-1850. The trader, and the government he represented, this author feels, played a significant part in the history of Kosciusko County, and the land surrounding it. The fur trader can be thought of as the astronauts of the trade era. They went out into vast unexplored areas that were unknown and brought back untold wealth. That wealth took many forms-furs, land, trade, etc.

#### THE POLITICAL ASPECT OF FUR TRADING

The fur trading era was very important to the Indiana lands. Without the individuals that led the way for the "whiteman's" civilization, many different sets of circumstances could have developed. The French seem to be the country that started fur trading, however, it soon turned into one of America's largest industries. From Nute we see:

"The French regime was responsible for the rise of this unique group of men (fur traders). From the days of earliest exploration until 1763 a large part of what is today Canada and much of the rest of the continent west of the Appalachian mountains was French territory. In this vast region lived the several tribes of Indians with whom the French settlers about Quebec and Montreal were not slow to barter furs....Furs were in great demand in

Europe and Asia, and both the English colonists along the Atlantic seaboard and the French in New France supported themselves in large part by means of a very flourishing fur trade."<sup>1</sup>

Not only were the fur trading days important to Indiana, but also they helped shape the domestic and foreign policies of many countries.

From Nute, we learn that the fur trading era was so significant that it brought about several major conflicts.

"In American and Canadian history these voyageurs played a significant role. The fur trade was for generations the chief industry of the continent.....several of the struggles between France and Great Britain were occasioned by a desire to reap the rich profits of the fur trade of West because the large fur trading companies exercised powerful influence over English, French, and American statesmen; that England's manufacturers realized the importance of the Indian country as one of their chief markets; and that the control of the western fur-trading posts was one of the chief objectives of the War of 1812." <sup>2</sup>

To more fully understand the politics that the early trader faced in Indiana, some significant details must be realized. A brief history is in order.

When the first trader came to Kosciusko County, events had occurred previously that had a varying degree on his success. The French came to Indiana through a series of rivers, portages, etc. from Fort Ponchartrain. This fort was established by Antoine de las Mothe-Cadillac in 1701. Its location was on the "detroit" between Lake Huron and Lake Erie and just below the mouth of the smaller Lake St. Clair. In this fort Cadillac ran things with an iron fist. However, Indian troubles did exist.

"....Cadillac had some significant Indian troubles which had presaged further troubles for all Frenchmen with the Indians in times to come. The relationships of the Indians who flocked to Detroit were not always cordial. Resident

bands of Hurons, Ottawas, and Chippewas established camps or villages in close conjunction to those Miami and Potawatomi tribes who had come here from the St. Joseph River area and that of the upper Maumee River. There were Foxes, Sacs, and Mascoutens, along with a few Menominees,.. While all these Indian bands got along well together at first a rumor suddenly arose and reached the Ottawas that the Hurons and Miamis were concocting a plan to joining forces and ambush them. The Ottawas acted first by attacking both Huron and Miami tribesmen. Cadillac, who might possibly have prevented it, since his influence with the Indians was strong, was away at the time. Before he returned, a great deal of blood had been spilled, including that of a Recollet missionary. When the commander did come back he immediately made a serious mistake by promising the head of the Ottawa chief to the Miami chief, then did an abrupt turnabout and pardoned the Ottawas. Retaliating in their anger, the Miamis killed three Frenchmen, forcing Cadillac to lead his men against them and make them submit. But the fires of resentment continued to burn in the Miamis and they soon moved south again to their previous villages on the upper Maumee and the headwaters of the Wabash. One faction even continued down the Wabash to near its mouth at the Ohio River...Here they openly invited English traders in...The Menominees angry over the whole business, packed up and went back across Lake Michigan. The Foxes, Sacs, and Mascoutens remained, but they were not especially liked by other tribes and war broke out in 1712. The remnants of the Fox, Sac, and Mascouten tribes blamed the French for the carnage and vowed there would come a day of reckoning.."<sup>3</sup>

#### EARLY FUR TRADERS

All trade was regulated by licenses since fur trading started in North America. The Frenchmen, who wanted to be legal in his trading, was given a license. From Nute we learn:

"Licenses to enter the Indian country were required; certain articles were prohibited in the trade; and only a specified number of traders might be licensed in one year. A man with sufficient capital to purchase a season's outfit acquired a license and hired men from his neighborhood to take the goods in canoes to the point at which the trader wished to sell his wares to the Indians." 4

Few pictures exist of fur trappers in Kosciusko County. The ones that do show men in business suits, and not the fur trading

regalia. However, some written accounts exist of various traders, voyageurs, and early explorers.

First it must be understood that the first trader came from a voyageur. This voyageur was part of a large company that came from either Quebec or Montreal. His main purpose was to paddle canoes. Canoes came in a variety of lengths and purposes. They were heavily laden with precious cargo for trading. These men were under the direction of the proprietor or bourgeois. The voyageurs were novices that did the hard work of transporting the goods to the trading posts, and returning the furs to Canada.

From these voyageurs came the hivernants or winterers. These individuals stayed at various locations, trading with Indians. The winterers could have easily stopped in Kosciusko County, however, the author does not have any proof of such trading.

All of the above men were a sturdy lot. They probably stood about five feet six inches in height. A taller man would take up too much valuable space in a canoe. The men were a very uneven proportioned lot, as their torso was huge, from so much paddling. Their legs on the other hand were very slight, as they did not walk much at all.

The voyageurs had a great pride in his work. To be such an individual was the dream of many young Canadian boys. The individual could paddle from fifteen to eighteen hours a day. He could carry from 200-450 pounds of merchandise on his back of rocky portages. He lived on very little while canoeing, and did not complain.

Why were these traders so much more successful than their English counterparts in the Indian trade? One reason was the inexhaustible desire for land. The English were interested in furs; but, they also

coveted the land from which the furs came. The French on the other hand did not want land for themselves. They were very content to trade.

They did want to protect "New France" though. This was done by a wall of sorts that would hopefully cutoff the spread of the English. Also it was hoped that it would sway the Indians in that area to the French side. To do this a series of nine forts were build along the river routes that fur traders used. Two of these were Fort Miamis--now Fort Wayne--and Fort Quiatenon--which is now close to Lafayette. Later, in 1733, another fort was established on Indiana soil. It was called Vincennes. These forts became very active in trade, and Indiana, and Kosciusko County played a very large part in this trade.

Eckert explains how these forts, whereas they took land as the English did, actually cemented relations with the Indians.

"There were many young white men at these nine western forts and a distinct scarcity of young marriageable white women. It was therefore not surprising that a fair number of Frenchmen took their cue from the Canadian coureurs de bois and cohabited with Indian women. Of this number, in fact, there were a good many who took squaws as wives. These marriages in themselves tended to have a cementing effect on French-Indian relations...so that the Indians would not ally themselves to the English." 5

So, the French were very much in command of the area up to the French and Indian War 1754-1763. After that time, organized French control did not exist. However, the Indians were comfortable in dealing with Frenchmen. Various English concerns hired them to do the trading. All went well until the Revolutionary War. Then again, a major shift in companies and traders came into being. The Indians had just gotten used to the new methods, when the English were ousted, or supposed to be out of the Indiana territory. Turmoil existed as rival

English and American traders tried to win the Indians over. Even The men that held control of the trading companies were American, though traders of French heritage actually worked in the posts with the Indians. When the Americans took over trade, a more elaborate system of trade grew. Merchants would buy goods used for trading and transport them to various frontier locations, such as Detroit or Fort Wayne. From here they were sent by river, to trading posts. The Indians on the other hand now were buying goods on credit at the beginning of the season. —This was new, and the Indians felt it was very good in the beginning. It wasn't until they had to settle accounts in the spring, when pelts became poor because of the warmer weather, did they find how poor they really were. The Indian soon found he was a distinct loser. For if the season was excessively poor, — he lost because he could not pay the entire bill. If the season was good, he usually spent it all on goods, and had to borrow again for the next year's hunt.

After the hides were collected, they were transported up river to various locations. Most Ohio Valley furs seem to have gone to New York first. Here some were sent to tanning establishments in America. Philadelphia, turned countless numbers of muskrat and beaver hides into hats. Most of the furs though were sent to London, where they were sent, "to Leipzig, Germany. From Leipzig the pelts eventually reached their final users in Europe, China, Greece, or Russia. As all purchases and sales were by commission, a fur trader in the heartland might not know for years if he had made a profit." 6

However, great profits were being made, and the Indians coming out the poorer. To somewhat control this, as early as 1790, all traders had to post bond and have a license. Those that did not have



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such license could have their good taken, and not be allowed into Indian country. Above all huge fines could be levied against these wrong doers. However, this legislation soon fell because of individuals that continued to take advantage of the Indians.

A new form of control was then established somewhere around 1796 that was a radical step for a new democracy to form. A factory system, or government owned trading houses were established. As early as 1801, Governor William Henry Harrison established factories. Fort Wayne was founded in 1802. Fort Wayne was such a success that between "1802 and 1811, Fort Wayne did more business than any other government post in the Old Northwest, although the sale of furs declined as the War of 1812 approached." 7 Private traders and merchants did not like this. They contended that this was a monopoly set up by the government to reap rich profits for themselves: and above all it was a direct interference with the traditional American enterprise system.

However, the War of 1812 soon put a stop to all of the trading. Indians stopped hunting and whites were driven from the area. Fort Wayne suffered so much, it was never to regain its old status. In 1814 the factory system stopped, because, the government was suffering losses. So, any trader that was brave enough could open the doors to trade with the Indians.

After the war, many old French families returned to the area and resumed business. However, they were also joined by a group of American businessmen. Fort Wayne again became a center for trade in this territory. Now we begin to find activity directly in the Kosciusko County area. Many traders, merchants, brokers and Indian Agent employees gathered in Fort Wayne. Names such as Francois

Godfroy, Alexis Coquillard, Francois Comparet, and John Duret, came and most likely transversed the Kosciusko County area. They were know to trade with Indians anywhere from the Peru area to South Bend. Many of these men knew that they could not continue as before, being individual traders loosely connected with an agency. So, they teamed up with Americans. One such American that had a significant impact on this immediate area was John Jacob Astor. Astor was an extremely shrewd man, and could and would use unscrupulous methods to gain vast profits. As shrewd business persons do, he went for political control. Again from Ankenbrush, we learn:

"At Congress in April, 29, 1816, the act forbad anyone trading with Indians, except Americans. This enabled Astor to cut the Canadian competition out. Next Astor was able to get legislation favorable to him which worked to the disadvantage of other American competition. Michigan Governor, Lewis Cass, looked the other way at times and one Senator was in Astor's pay. Even though it was against the law, Astor used liquor to get trade." 8

Apparently from letters etc. Astor had a dream of controlling the Great Lakes trade, through his fur company, the American Fur Company. Soon he had done this. In the Kosciusko area one of his able lieutenants was Jean B. Richardville, a nephew of Little Turtle and then head of the Miami Indians in this area.

Richardville, was not kind to his kinsmen. In a time when Indians were loosing their lands, a soldier's pay was a few dollars a month, and many Indians were living on hand outs, Ankenbrush tells us this about Richardville:

"Much has been said about the huge riches gathered by Jean Batiste Richardville, the half-French nephew of Chief Turtle. Richardville, whose Indian name was Pechewa, was indeed wealthy. In an era when Pioneer families in the vicinity had few dollars for down payments on government lands, Richardville had growing piles of gold coins.

Money was a very scarce item in the backwoods, yet Richardville had shipped in a safe or iron strong box in which to store an estimated \$200,000 in gold coins. "In today's reckoning, this would be like having several million dollars in cash on hand." 9

One of the ways that Richardville made his living was by operating the portage between the Maumee and Wabash Rivers. The site is recorded in Huntington Indiana, where state roads 9 and 24 intersect.

Astor in 1819 established his "Wabash Outfit". This organization held the upper hand on trading for several years. The monopoly it held must have been worth billions in a world where millions was hard to conceptualize. Many local traders, like Richardville, found it very lucrative to do business with Astor. Often it was the only place to deal without traveling great distances, which caused drastic reduction in profits. From Ankenbrush again we learn what a month's take was in Fort Wayne for Astor:

"The deer skins numbered 1,140; the raccoon skins 26,839; beaver was listed at 26 pounds, there were 733 skins of cats and foxes; 83 otter skins, 251 muskrat skins, 94 bear skins, and three wolf skins. On other bills were listed greater numbers of wolves, bucks and does; three buffalo and elk, mink and lynx. Sixty pounds of beeswax was also listed." 10

Traders learned to dispose this organization, but most were helpless to do anything about it. However, an economic development soon opened the doors for others to enter this realm.

The Indians no longer had furs to trade as they once did. As mentioned in a previous section, the tribes of Potawatomis and Miamis, with lesser tribes of Delawares, Kickapoos, Wyandots, and Weas were all located in the Indiana area. All went well for the tribes until the flood of settlers arrived from Pennsylvania and the Treaty of Fort Wayne (1809) came into being. With the Treaty of Fort Wayne, William

Henry Harrison negotiated away several large tracts of land in southern Indiana. The tribes all received a pittance of money, approximately \$250. to \$500. as annual annuities. This push for land was one of the contributing factors that led to the Indian participation in the War of 1812. During the war, tribes moved further north to be closer to their supply routes into Canada. After the British loss, several tribes stayed there, giving up their Indiana land in the bargain. The first major treaty forcing Indians to give up their lands came in October 1818. From Trennert we learn:

"Federal negotiators—Lewis Cass, Jonathan Jennings, and Benjamin Parke for the Potawatomi, Wea, Delaware, and Miami Indians to surrender central Indiana. The Delawares, who remained loyal to the United States during the war, suffered the most.....The subsidies intended for the Indians rapidly became the subsidies for the trader, who realized that the fur trade could not last forever. Fur-bearing animals were already beginning to diminish in number, and the future removals inevitable, enterprising opportunists among the traders recognized that they could make surer profits from supplying the tribes with goods in return for their annuity money. Thus the traders increasingly began to cater to every desire of Indians and to supply them with a large quantity of merchandise on credit, payable at annuity time....Merchants kept a list of all indebtedness and gathered at Indian villages at the annual payment time to ensure that they were paid before any money fell into Indian hands. In several cases traders indebted the Indians to such an extent that the whole annuity would be paid to the merchants, leaving the tribesmen to borrow on the following year's annuity." 11

Also, with the Indians going into debt so much, and people lusting after the land, the trader became involved in land speculation. It was such that it took presidential decree for land to be sold, however, if the local Indian agent sought such approval it was usually given. Thus, if the trader was on good terms with the Indian Agent, he could swing some very good deals.

Into this era of corruption and turmoil step two brothers who actually trod on Kosciusko County soil. While the Ewing Brothers were not as large as Astor and the American Fur Company, the fact that they were very money hungry is well documented.

The Ewings, George and William, along with their father, Alexander first came into the Fort Wayne area in app. 1822. Although they did not start trading with the Indians for furs at that time, "he (Alexander) did attempt to supply some of the Miamis' needs." 12 This was in terms of salt. He was one of many who tried to sell this commodity to the Indians. At this he was not successful. However, he did do better at selling them fence rails. He gained "\$350.14 which came from an annuity fund." 13

In October of 1824, and March of 1825, William Ewing along with John Bourie, applied and received licenses to trade at English Lake on the Kankakee River. Both men were the first white traders and received the following instructions:

...they must confine their trade to the area assigned, deal fairly with the tribes, take no liquor into the Indian country, report unlicensed traders to the agent, persuade the Indians to be peaceful, and hire no foreigners." 14 p. 19

It was found that a more formally organized structure was needed if the gentlemen were to make vast sums of money. So in 1825 the A. Ewing & Sons Company was formed.

This organization tripled the dollar amount at English Lake, so a second trading post was established around the same area. Clerks, mostly of French descent were used in these trading posts (this is an important point to consider for later). The pelts and furs gotten from the posts were sent to warehouses in Fort Wayne. In the beginning, the

Ewings received all of their goods to be traded from Astor's American Fur Company. However, as it did all those independent traders, the necessity of going through this arch rival was repugnant. So in the year of 1826, the brothers started to make these transactions through the business enterprise of Suydam and Jackson.

The brothers were not only busy making money, they were also starting to make their mark in politics as well. Charles became the prosecuting attorney for the circuit court. One organization helped the Ewings to a great extent, as well as other traders. This was the local lodge of the Masons. Both the Ewing brothers held offices. Here local traders, Indian Agents, and other individuals would gather to socialize. The climate was ripe for many business deals, and the Ewings were ready to deal. By the mid 1820's, the brothers had established several trading posts. Some were at Fort Wayne, English Lake, AUBENAUBEE'S VILLAGE, and the Forks of the Iroquois. Again from Trennert we learn that:

"...but hired traders to handle its goods in northern Indiana near the Michigan border. In July 1827, Pierre F. Navarre agreed to see Ewing goods at this store at St. Joseph, and after 1828, Charles Rousseau acted as the Ewing agent at St. Joseph and Elkhart. 15 p. 24

Much more could be written about the Ewings and how they soon came to dominate the local (Kosciusko County and surrounding) area, but more about the men themselves is needed to fully understand them.

A local merchant describes the brothers as,

"Enterprising, laborious, adventurous men they were, but so devoted to business, so persistent in the pursuit of gain, that they had no time to enjoy the fruits of their labor. I have rarely met their equals in business capacity or general intelligence; very few have I known who had less real enjoyment of life." 16 p. 24

Another look comes from Julia Gilman, she states:

"Ewing was a tall, well-proportioned man with excellent manners, as much at home in a ballroom as among the Indians trading furs. He had a cat-like elastic step, much admired by the Indians. His mind was extremely quick, especially when a business deal was under consideration, and then no one could equal him. The major flaw in his character was that he was extremely nervous. When pressed, the princely manners evaporated and a knife or gun would appear, ready to serve, in his hand. 17 p. 282"

Yet on one extremely cold night in January 1835, he came upon an Indian's camp. It was a small place called Deaf Man's Village. Here after the inhabitants left for bed, an old Indian Squaw told a marvelous story to Ewing. Her name was Maconaquah, or long ago Francis Slocum. After being told the story, he contacted relatives in Pennsylvania. The Ewings were a part of the fur trading era that many visualize when talking about cruelty to Indians and taking goods and land from them. Yet one had a soft spot in his heart for this old lady.

At this time one other individual needs to be brought into the picture. He was directly related to Kosciusko County. The readers were introduced to a brother earlier. Another source was sought to make sure that Ankerbrush's claim, that the Rosseau's actually worked for the Ewings, was sought. Indiana University states that:

"The Ewings tried to get all the furs around Fort Wayne. They soon enlisted traders at St. Joseph, Elkhart, Murcie, and Vincennes, and in 1830 went to Logansport.... Among the more important of the Ewing agents were the brothers, D. and C. Rosseau, who traded for some years at St. Joseph and Elkhart." 18

Dominique Rosseau was one of the Frenchmen that English traders came to realize could deal very well with Indians. He purportedly was very fair in his dealings with the Indians. From the History of Kosciusko County, 1919, we learn:

"Rosseau was.....a friend to both whites and reds, a master of the art of barter and trade, the first of his race to make a home within the bounds of the county." 19

From the newest history, Kosciusko County 1836-1986, we get a more complete picture:

"Rosseau was born about the year 1795 into a family of Montreal fur traders and, in 1815, the young Dominique is recorded as being near Benton..... By 1820, Dominique Rousseau and his associate, Henry Ossem, came to northern Kosciusko County and began operations. These youthful Frenchmen were probably quite dashing in their traditional reds, yellows and blues. Ossem, who married the daughter of Chief Richardville, settled on the Tippecanoe River near present day Oswego and Rosseau had his post between the future villages of Milford and Leesburg. Henry eventually moved on and is believed to be buried near Ft. Wayne. Dominique also married an Indian girl, most likely the daughter of Chief Wawasee, and fathered a daughter Matilda.

"When Madame Rosseau, as she was known, died, the daughter was taken to be raised by her god-father, Alexis Coquillard, in South Bend. "Tilly" Rosseau, who never married, eventually moved to Warsaw and later to California where she died.

Following the death of his first wife, Dominique married Aggie Ervin, the daughter of Charles Ervin. The Ervins were early and prominent settlers of Plain Township. The Roseaus were the parents of two sons, who both saw service in the Civil War, and two daughters.

...He also ran for the county commissioner on the Democratic ticket. ....Dominique Rosseau developed a cough which is believed to be tuberculosis and died in 1845 at the age of 49 years. His burial site,...is in the Leesburg cemetery near the utility building." 20

From Armstrong, and his History of Leesburg, we find that:

"Dominique Rosseau, who build a hewed log house on the lot now owned by Samuel Garrett and at present occupied by Wallace butcher shop, and brought his goods from his Indian trading post on Bone prairie to Leesburg and opened his store. He afterward bought J.B. Chapman's stock of goods and build a store room on the north side of Van Burean street, where the Stookey restaurant is at this time. here he kept store fore two or three years, but finally sold out and moved to his farm northeast of town, now owned, we think, my Emanuel Dubbs. 21

Not much more is "actually known" about Rosseau. It is hard to be "sure" of any further descriptions. However, certain suppositions can be made. For instance, his height can be supposed to be around 5



feet six inches tall and he was probably burly. This information was given earlier in the description of a fur trader. He was a winterer, or one who stayed with the Indians, so that made him more intelligent and ambitious than the run-of-the-mill-trader. What things did he need to know? For he was the one that was actually dealing with Indians on a day-to-day basis. Even though the Indians were much subdued, a slight could have brought death to him.

Rousseau would have had to know about the wilds. He didn't have the luxuries that the modern man has. His life, initially, could have been much the same as the earlier French fur trapper coming from Fort Miami or Quiatenon.

#### Warmth and Fires

He would have made his fires by flint and steel, or some other method of creating a spark. To use flint and steel properly, one must something to hold the spark made by striking the flint onto steel. Then, tinder must be rapidly added to take that spark and then burn readily. Char cloth was a popular way of holding the spark. Char cloth is simply pure cotton cloth that was super heated in a closed container, over a fire. This was often carried by hunters, trappers, and explorers. Materials that were used as tinder to start a blaze were certain birds nests, grasses, or hemp rope. This was made into a sort of bird's nest that contained the char cloth in the middle. As the spark struck the char cloth, it was blown upon by the individual. The char cloth would ignite the hemp etc. and flame rapidly. Next the birds nest would be placed upon the ground where smaller twigs etc would be added, in hopes that a fire would ensue.

If the weather was exceptionally wet, then the voyageur might take a candle to place underneath the birds nest, and dry out the twigs

and wood. A person knowing some basic tricks could and can start a fine fire in all types of weather.

#### Clothes, Coats, Hats, etc.

His clothes would have been made of wool, with a possibility of leather pants. Wool was greatly preferred, as leather is very cold and holds moisture. Wool on the other hand will channel water to the bottom of a coat or shirt, thus leaving the wearer still protected to some extent. Yes, if totally immersed, a wool garment will be wet and cold, but for the most part wool was preferred, especially in the winter. Pants would have been breeches, which are pants that are cut off just below the knee. They fasten at the knee with either buttons or some sort of draw string. To protect the legs heavy woolen socks were worn to just over the knee. After the 1850's pants were brought into the realm of men's fashion. These still were the button fly type, and resembled the garb of the present day Amish men. Often when outside in snow, leggings made of either leather or wool were worn. Not only did they protect the legs from the cold, but also briars and forms of prickly abrasives that could harm the skin. These leggings often had a flap that would cover the shoe or moccasin. Foot wear was to the 1850's a simple moccasin that was of very easy construction. It simply was a piece of skin that fit over the foot and was sown up the center. For extended trips into the wilderness, a sole made of a thicker hide could be added to the bottom of the moccasin. In winter often two to three moccasins might be worn. The first being of skin of some sort. This would be treated with a concoction of animal fat and beeswax. This would be the form of waterproofing. Another moccasin made of old scraps of wool blanket could be added over this inner layer. This would add a great deal of insulation. If necessary, wool, that has not

been processed, could be added for further warmth. If wool was not available, certain plant filaments could be used to add softness and warmth.

Summer wear probably would have been some sort of cotton shirt and cotton pants. Before the 1800's breeches could be worn without the knee socks. Also, we have learned previously in this paper that the French adapted to Indian ways much more than English traders. Rosseau could have worn either a breech cloth or breech clout in the very warmest months, especially as he was married to an Indian maiden. A breech cloth is simply a piece of cotton or linen cloth that passes between the legs and is secured to the person with a string, belt, or other means. The breech clout was more of a pair of short shorts that had the cloth hanging down in front and back. Shoes would be either a single pair of moccasins or going bare footed.

A trader would have had to be careful though, as the Indians liked cloth also. He would not have wanted to use some of his trade goods to cloth himself or his family, unless he was long established and fairly affluent.

His coat would have probably been a wool blanket coat or capote. This were used by early traders, and were very serviceable. The capote was simply a blanket with sleeves, more than likely a hood, and a belt. They were very warm in winter, and did offer protection against snow.

#### Transportation and Living Facilities

Rosseau would have used the rivers as much as possible for transporting his goods. In fact he placed his first trading post at the edge of a river. More than likely, the trader set a log cabin as

soon as he possibly could. The creature comforts that it offered were vastly superior to what Indians may have constructed.

#### Food

The Miami Indians had gardens. Here they raised squash and other vegetables. Also for a certain time, the forest were full of game. If Rosseau was not a good shot, he could have traded for food, but this would be bad business-eating the profits. However, one did not venture into the wilderness without certain survival skills. If the game was gone in the summer and spring, then edible plants were available for those who knew them. With his gun, probably a smooth bore musket, he could use either solid projectiles or shot. The shot could be used for bird, squirrels, rabbits, etc. (It would be used as a shotgun. Whereas the solid shot could be for larger animals.

#### Recreation

Day light hours were valuable to the early settlers. After hours making of various sundries was practical if not vital. Moccasins and leather items could be fashioned. From the Kosciusko County 1836-1986 we learn that:

"Although an accomplished woodsman and more at ease with the Indian than the white, Dominique Rousseau seems to have been quite refined. He owned a number of books, dining table, and locking glass, brass eight-day clock and probably the county's first wood burning cook stove." 22

Rousseau could read and write, a matter not to be taken lightly. It was very important and more than likely a prerequisite for getting his job for Ewing. His large amount of trappings of civilization mean that at least at times, Rousseau was well to do. The article does not mention if these were obtained before or after his fur trading days.

#### Specialization in His Profession

As is in any occupation, the trader must specialize. His expertise fell in the community relations area. Rousseau was known to deal fairly with his Indian brothers. This did not come easy, and more than likely, even in the end he had to use his special knowledge to help him. What types of skills did he possess? One had to be the way in which he gave and took presents from Indians. Presents had been a way of life amongst the Indians, so if traders wanted to be friendly, they must follow the pattern. It was an intricate pattern though. As Jacobs tells us:

"In a metaphorical language of the forest, each gift might signify a wish or a greeting. Several gifts might denote special emphasis of one kind or another. For example, one gift might offer a prayer that the price of trading goods might be reduced. Another might figuratively "light" a warm council fire; still a third might signify that all could speak freely. . . . (Traders) observed that presents spoke more clearly than the lips. From these illustrations, it is evident that the ambassador of the forest had to be well-stocked with suitable presents before he could make his wishes known in a public meeting." 23

Such gifts often were for the men of the tribe. "Arms and munitions were acceptable to warriors; goods intended for sachems must be of a different type; and certain items, such as food, were necessary at all times for all groups." 24

It is extremely interesting though that among certain tribes, the women often were catered to. Again Jacobs states:

"Records bear out that both the French and the British were aware of this influence and used it in their dealings with the Indians. Official lists abound with requests for feminine gifts. Blankets for women were a different size from those made for men. Women's scarlet hose with clocks were in demand. The consistent request for "lively colors" in calicoes, ribbons, and gartering pointed to feminine tastes." 25

Although, certain gifts were given in hopes of starting a

dependency. For instance when jewelry was first given, Indians had never seen silver. Both the male and female segment of the population fell in love and used it for adornment. Thus the trader had "hooked" the Indian to a different way of life.

Looking further at this idea of specialization, Rosseau needed to know what certain forms of the Indian symbolism meant. For instance, another form of exchange was used in the 1750-1850 period. This was wampum. The trader was not interested in this as a means of exchange, as he wanted furs. These wampum belts were actually made from small shells that were painstakingly drilled and added to strings. But wampum went beyond the monetary realm and held some spiritual significance. For instance wampum, in different colors meant different things--war being an example. These belts could be used for presents, however, they were mainly means to start communication.

Just before all individual or group discussions, a calumet was given to each visitor, "it was a sign that all of the village should honor and respect him." 26 This was a sign of peace and contentment. Surprisingly, another form of peace symbol was the ax or tomahawk. The term to "bury the hatchet" comes from this. Early traders found that to bury the hatchet in a bottomless hole was a sign of everlasting friendship. This obviously was significant if trade was to continue.

#### Monetary Rewards

Rosseau came to make money. From the section above on the Ewings it can readily be seen that they definitely expected monetary remuneration for the goods they bought. This area was alive with fur-bearing animals. A geography lesson of Kosciusko County would point the astounding amount of water that is present. Many animals that had

pelts in vogue at that time came from water areas.

Yet at times Rousseau could not bring in the amounts of furs needed, or could not get the price he would have liked for them.

From Trennent we find that:

"Yet all these operations were limited in scope and not always profitable. For example, in August 1828 Rousseau reported selling only six hundred dollars worth of goods to the Miamis at annuity time and having to dispose of blankets, at a loss, to the AFC When Indians showed no interest in buying." 27

The author has two letters that entreat the Ewing brothers to give them some financial help in December, 1828 and January, 1829 also. The actual words of Dominique Rousseau are:

"...I am sorry to tell you that i have not seen nothing, For the St. Joseph traders takes three Raccours to the Dlooar and the ....good for nothing. i do not Complaine of Ms. Coquillard for he is doing nothing. But Ms. Talon he's the man that has wasting the goods. i have not taken three dollars for this month past. So you may ....that I am going to tell you the truth i have not 20 Dollars worth of furs yet and the Season is so unfavornable For the Indians to hunt that I am afraid if it Continues that all that we have taken in is nearly all that we will Make this Season,. Nevertheless if you do not give us Further Encouragement you Cannot expect us to dispose of the Ballence of the goods, Gentlemen i thank you are very decitful i am Surpirse of you, you have not met recording to yoor.....Respecting to my memorandum i had sent by Ms. Godfrey i have lost 2 or 3 weeks. ....you have promise to rite to me but you have notwhat stops you from riting to me. Should that you will rite me or fue lines respecting ...or furs.

I Remain Your Most Obedient  
signature 28

The other letter also bemoans the fact that nothing has been written to Mr. Rousseau from the Ewings. No matter if the man had an eight day clock, he had to pay his price for it too. So, trading was not always lucrative. This says a lot for the pioneer ethic that so this man displayed. It is easy to see how a many could start to deal in alcohol, short change the Indians, or do other dirty tricks.

However, the fact still remains that Rousseau went down in history as one of the men that treated Indians well.

#### CONCLUSION

Kosciusko County was in the "thick" of the fur trading business. Many avenues and approaches may be taken from this paper and used to find out much, much more. With the resurgence of knowledge focusing on the French and Indian War and the factors that proceeded and occurred right after, new facts open themselves. Men like Rousseau and Ossem came onto the area and opened the door for those who followed in a wholesome manner. Those like the Ewings left a bad taste in history's mouth. They did open the door for those who wished to take the Indian's land and their money. However, they too found good. The story of Maconaquah could finally be told because of one lone brother being cold one night and sharing the hospitality of an Indian.

Hopefully this article will open the doors for others to explore this aspect of the County history or other facets. Also, hopefully this work will stimulate someone to see what other men saw in an earlier time period. It is all interesting, and very enjoyable.



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