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FORCED CULTURE CHANGE:  
MENOMINEE TERMINATION,  
1954-1973

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Plaintiff's Exhibit KH - 1

6. Family and Community  
7. Total Termination

8. Government  
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10. Summary of the Impacts of Termination

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**\*NOTE: The following pages represent only selected sections of Hall's thesis.**

inability to fully understand the effects of Termination at the time they plunged into them.

Even if they were aware that they had a major claim with a likelihood of success -- and I have seen no evidence that they did before it was filed -- such a lawsuit simply could not displace the more urgent problems they faced every day. Had they arrived at the third stage of the disaster syndrome, perhaps the situation would have changed. But still in the second stage, in my opinion they lacked the ability to pursue a major lawsuit that did not threaten their daily lives, whose dimensions were vague and debatable, and which was not being pushed by the rank and file.

### III. WORKING FOR RESTORATION -- The Land Crisis

Although busy with survival issues (food, shelter, jobs, raising families, health care), adult Menominee in Madison and Milwaukee began to discuss "picking up the pieces". Initially after 1961, there were different ideas about how to solve the problems of Termination. Eventually in the late 1960's and early 1970's, following efforts to stop land sales, families split farther apart, being on differing political sides on the issue. Divorces, family violence, school dropouts, and increasing substance abuse reflected these tensions.

Menominee young adults raised without tribal identity, and without tribal cultural events, tried different ways to try to regain their cultural identity. During the movement to reverse Termination, these young adults got a clear idea for the first time as to what Termination was, and the losses involved, as they became parents themselves. During Termination, their parents, in turn, still on the former Reservation wanted to save what they could of the tribal communal identity. They saw with alarm the progressive land losses in the Legend Lake Development and talked to their adult children. Former Menominee from Milwaukee, Chicago, etc., joined in the networking.

MEI's proposal to sell off over 5000 acres of land focused their attention and acted as a trigger to end the dilemma of immobility (see pp. 38-40 above). This loss of Menominee land became a symbol of all that was wrong as a result of Termination. When the land developers' bulldozers arrived, Menominee watched trees being torn down, streams and lake shores drastically altered, and sacred burial sites destroyed. (B1, B27) One consultant (B27) said that they rode around as teenagers to watch the heavy equipment, but realized, "Hey; they're digging up bones there!"

The destruction of known sacred sites such as Pewisit Lake Mound Group and Watasa Lake Swamp Site

(Barrett & Skinner 1932:432-437; 460-463; KH-33) by bulldozers and the artificial raising of lake levels saddened and angered Menominee people. One consultant (B1) recounted the horror of seeing this destruction saying:

Many sites were destroyed. Pewisit Lake Mound Group would be one, and Watasa Lake Swamp Site was lost, too. These were only the known sites. There were undoubtedly others that were demonlished, too.

This cultural loss was devastating to Menominee people.

Many Menominee were outraged about being forced from their traditional lands. This was described by one consultant (B22) who spoke of his father's anger at being confronted by a new non-Indian landowner and told to get off his land. According to the consultant, "Many of our elders could not understand this. Many of our traditional people would not accept this." Further, opposition to the land sales was a way to fight and avoided pinning blame on individuals. As one consultant explained, people said, "I'll fight for the land, but I won't fight against the people." (A5) This became the controversy of the era.

Those Menominee leaders who believed that economic development were the keys to Menominee survival pursued the land sales, which would enlarge the county tax base, enable the County and MEI to survive, and bring in outsiders already adept at surviving in the mainstream society. Menominee who had continued to work with MEI

did what they thought they had to; they thought they were helping the tribe to survive economically (Consultants A3, B6, B15). From a corporate standpoint, the economic situation was "quite dismal" with an enormous tax bill to be paid by MEI. At the time (early 1970's) that the land sales were instigated, and bulldozers tore up the forest and changed the lake shores, many Menominee blamed the leaders who had worked with the corporate management of MEI.

In contrast, a group which became known as DRUMS (Determination of Rights and Unity for Menominee Shareholders) became politically active and sought the support of national political leaders. Small groups of concerned Menominee had been meeting in Chicago and Milwaukee (A3, A5, B12, A13) and also in "house meetings" on former Reservation land. Groups began to demonstrate at the dinners given to promote Legend Lake land sales. The land sales were promoted much more aggressively in the city newspapers (B12, A13). Therefore, Menominee who were living in Chicago and Milwaukee were even more aware of the large-scale efforts to market Menominee lands for sale than those Menominee living on former Reservation areas nearer the lands advertised for sale.

Other Menominee were reluctant to see the activism, thinking of it as primarily disruptive, and often hurled taunts such as: "Are you trying to be Indian? What's

the matter; can't you make it in the white world?" (A3, A13, B12). The violence associated with these demonstrations split families; for example, when one spouse joined a demonstration and another was a part of the law enforcement for that event (B3, A16). After it became apparent that the efforts were going to lead to a proposal for legislation to reverse Termination and that it was gaining national support, the local support became widespread and, finally, essentially unanimous among Menominee people. However, resentment for the initial tensions and divisions remains today.

Another segment of the tribe which had earlier established a non-profit corporation under Wisconsin law designed to be the tribe's successor, tried to hold general meetings of Menominee much like the old General Council, and sought to find a way to preserve tribal traditions (B11, affidavits of A. Dodge, G. Dickie, F.W. Walker; Pl. Exh. KH-7, KH-8, KH-<sup>29</sup>~~23~~). For a time, they met in a basement to discuss concerns before it was feasible to discuss open action, and later, became involved in the work toward legislative reversal of Termination. However, they had no money and were able to do little.

After the Restoration legislation was passed, the Menominee Restoration Committee (MRC) was set up to re-establish tribal political structure and write a

constitution as mandated in the Restoration Act. The frustrations accumulated from the brutal pressures leading to reversal of Termination and from the newly articulated awareness of the damages incurred under Termination boiled over. Because it differed from the pre-Termination government, many Menominee felt that a foreign type of government was being forced on them by the MRC. One consultant (B27) said,

We saw it as a centralized system and didn't want it. We thought that the MRC were puppets of the United States government. We didn't realize the requirements of the Restoration Act.

At meetings to discuss parts of the new constitution, desires for a Menominee school and clinic were discussed among other topics. The Novitiate buildings were unused at the time, and the decision was made to demonstrate an initiative to pursue an option to return that property to Menominee territory. (B7, B27) It also came from a frustration with ambiguous actions from the MRC leadership which was under tremendous pressure to accomplish the reinstatement of a government that had been torn apart over a decade ago. One consultant (B8) talked about the political disruption of Termination and Restoration in the following way:

It destroyed our political system and put another system in. And, it substituted a system not only that we didn't understand, but that we're still in turmoil over today. Now we have a Euro-American system. It's totally bought and paid for.

Information circulated that the new constitution was printed up and in boxes while the discussions went on over parts of it; the confusion triggered the Novitiate action. (B27)

The Menominee Warrior Society occupied Novitiate buildings in an effort to involve more of the Menominee community in the efforts to re-form the Tribe after the Restoration legislation had passed in 1973. (B7, B2, A5) Although the situation was formally resolved, it left a schism among the younger generation who had grown up during the Termination years and ripples from this rift remain today. Members of this generation understand this episode as a direct result of the chaos of Termination. The divisions created by these differing viewpoints which split families, 'brother against brother', leading up to and following Restoration legislation, have continued to influence Menominee culture to the present. (B2, B6, B7, B27, A3)

Thus, not until after Restoration did Menominee emerge in stage three of the disaster syndrome. The concern with land sales in the Legend Lake project had resulted in demonstrations against the sales, and eventually legislation was sought to reverse Termination. But still, realization of true nature of the social and cultural losses eluded Menominee. Many young adults in the 1960's had grown up under Termination, and as they

began to raise their families in the 1970's, now under Restoration, they began to realize what they had missed in their own childhood. They did not have knowledge of language, cultural practices, and cultural traditions that their parents had had. This lack fueled the Novitiate take over among those Menominee (B27) who thought that might be a location for a Menominee school. (See discussion above.)

In the 1970's, Menominee adults who had grown up under Termination faced the responsibilities of parenthood without the cultural knowledge to pass on. They had come of age into a cultural context (Restoration) very different from that they had known growing up (Termination), and they, and their parents, realized what they had lost under Termination. Both of these generations spoke to me of the realization coming after Restoration, those growing up under Termination (A2, A17) and their parents (A3, A7). When they saw what they could not give their own children, they realized they were socioculturally damaged. Only then (by now the 1980's), could the Menominee pursue ways to improve their situation and seek redress for the social disruption they had undergone during at least two generations.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

With each interview, I have asked the question, "What was the greatest impact of Termination?" Most have