

4

The Fur Trade Era: Exploration and Exchange in Wisconsin

This chapter deals with almost 200 years of Wisconsin history, from about 1634 to about 1832. This period witnessed the first arrival of non-Indians to the area as well as dramatic changes to Indian life that resulted. Students' work with this material will help reinforce their understanding of how tribal people's lifeways were influenced by the land on which they lived. It will also help students use an awareness of Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk calendars and food to understand the similarities and differences between these two native peoples.

Activity 4.1 *Eating Off the Land*

Overview

In this activity students use trade books, tribal calendars, and food to look at the differences and similarities between two Indian groups.

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 4.1 (Teacher Pages 1–3; Student Pages 1–2)
- *The Sacred Harvest* by Gordon Regguinti (optional)
- *Four Seasons of Corn* by Sally M. Hunter (optional)
- “Recipes: Wild Rice Soup, Corn Casserole” (Student Page 3; optional)

Grouping

- Group students as follows: Whole class, then small groups of 3–4, then whole class

Activity 4.2 *Making a Birchbark Canoe*

Overview

In this activity, students make a model of a birchbark canoe, giving them a tactile sense of the shape and structure of Wisconsin's predominant form of water transportation during the first half of the nineteenth century. This will also help students understand the many uses to which canoes were put during this period.

Note: This activity was adapted from Robert Livesy and A. G. Smith, *The Fur Traders*, Discovering Canada Series (Toronto: Stoddart Kids, 1989).

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 4.2 (Teacher Pages 1–2; Student Pages 1–2)
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Scissors
- Paste

- Vegetable oil (optional)
- Tubs of water (optional)

Grouping

- Group students as follows: Small groups, then individual students, then student pairs, and finally whole-group discussion

Activity 4.3 Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now**Overview**

Throughout history, people have sought the most efficient and inexpensive means to transport themselves and their goods from place to place. Although water transportation still remains important for both shipping and recreation, most everyday transportation today is land based. To highlight changes in transportation that have taken place in Wisconsin, this activity compares historic river travel with contemporary highway travel. This will help students recognize the importance that river travel had in the past at the same time that it gives them practice with important map skills.

Management*Materials*

- Student Activity 4.3 (Teacher Pages 1–3; Student Pages 1–3)
- Standard Wisconsin highway map (optional)
- String (optional)
- Student Pages 4–5 (optional)

Grouping

- Pairs

The Fur Trade Era: Exploration and Exchange in Wisconsin

Activity 4.1: Eating off the Land

Teacher Materials

Preparation/Organization Students will work with their own copies of Student Pages 1 and 2 for this activity, so you should make copies of these pages beforehand. You will also want copies for yourself to use as transparencies. Enrichment activities include work with Gordon Regguinti's *The Sacred Harvest* and Sally M. Hunter's *Four Seasons of Corn*. If you choose to do either or both of these activities, you will need copies of those works to share with students. Another enrichment activity involves preparing foods that utilize Native American ingredients. You may wish to have students prepare these foods with you or as an at-home assignment with adult supervision. If you do this activity in school, you will need to assemble the ingredients ahead of time and make arrangements to have an appropriate space and the necessary equipment on hand.

Procedure

1. Review with students that the tribal people living in Wisconsin developed different ways of life depending upon where they lived.
2. Pass out copies of the "Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk Calendars" worksheet (Student Page 1), explaining that the Ojibwe are also known as the Chippewa and that the Ho-Chunk are also known as the Winnebago.
3. Display a transparency of the worksheet, having students follow along on their own copies. Read the Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk names for January and February aloud. Then have students take turns reading aloud the remaining months.
4. When you have finished, ask students to think about the objects, animals, and activities described in the names for each month. Ask:
 - Did the Ojibwe live in northern or southern Wisconsin? How could you tell?
 - Did the Ho-Chunk live in northern or southern Wisconsin? What helped you decide this?
 - What do the names of the months tell us about Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk's ways of life?
5. Give students copies of the "Tribal Lands" map (Student Page 2). Then divide the class into groups of 3 to 4 students and give them time to study the map.
6. Remind students of the maps they used for Activity 2.4 ("Where Would You Like to Live?"), having students use the maps as references. For each tribal area, ask:
 - What rivers were there?
 - What was the soil like?

- What kinds of vegetation were there?
 - What minerals were present?
 - What was the growing season like?
7. Have students write the data on their maps in the appropriate areas.
 8. When they have finished, have students share and discuss their findings.

Enrichment You might want to do one or more of the following for enrichment:

- Read Gordon Regguinti's *The Sacred Harvest* to the class. As you read, have students pay attention to the season when wild rice is harvested and to the importance of wild rice to the Ojibwe. After reading the book, talk with the class about these points.
- Read aloud *Four Seasons of Corn*, by Sally M. Hunter. Discuss questions similar to those posed for *The Sacred Harvest*. Have students pay close attention to the seasonal activities that Hunter describes and to the importance of corn to the Winnebago (Ho-Chunk).
- Have students prepare tribal foods. Student Page 3 provides recipes for two such foods. One of the recipes contains corn, a southern Wisconsin staple, and the other recipe contains wild rice, a northern Wisconsin staple. The foods can be prepared ahead of time or made as a class activity. (For example, the soup can be made by someone at home or, alternatively, it can be prepared in the morning and then allowed to simmer in a slow cooker during the day.)

Answers

Step 4 Students should sense that the month names used by the Ojibwe imply that they lived in a colder, more northern climate than the Ho-Chunk. Students should also sense that the names of the months indicate that the Ho-Chunk were more corn-centered in their activities, since several month names focused on the cultivation, harvesting, and eating of corn. The Ojibwe, in contrast, do not exhibit such a strong focus on a single crop, but instead seem more oriented toward gathering foods from the wild.

Step 6 Students should recognize most of the following elements:

Ojibwe Lands: Rivers include White, Bad, St. Croix, Namekagon, Flambeau, Wisconsin; Soil types include Lake Superior Red Clay, Northern Sandy and Stony; Vegetation includes prairie and mostly forest; Minerals include a small amount of copper; Growing seasons include less than 80 days, 80–100 days, 100–120 days, 120–140 days, and 140–160 days.

Dakota Lands: Rivers include Black, Trempealeau, Chippewa, Red Cedar, St. Croix; Soil types include Rolling Fertile Silty and Clayey, Central Silty and Loamy; Vegetation includes forest and mostly prairie; Minerals include a tiny amount of copper; Growing seasons include 120–140 days and 140–160 days.

Menominee Lands: Rivers include Fox, Wolf, Menominee, Wisconsin; Soil types include Central Silty and Loamy, Rolling Fertile Silty and Clayey; Vegetation includes mostly forest and quite a bit of prairie; Minerals include a small amount of copper; Growing seasons include 120–140 days, 140–160 days, and more than 160 days.

Ho-Chunk Lands: Rivers include Milwaukee, Fox, Rock, Pecatonica, Wisconsin, Kickapoo, Black; Soil types include Rolling Fertile Silty and Clayey, Central Silty and Loamy; Vegetation includes mostly prairie and a small amount of forest; Minerals include a small amount of copper and substantial amounts of lead and zinc; Growing seasons include 120–140 days, 140–160 days, and more than 160 days.

Name _____ Date _____

Activity 4.1 Eating Off the Land**Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk Calendars**

Month	Ojibwe	Ho-Chunk
January	Big Spirit Month	First Bear Month
February	Snow Crusted Month	Last Bear Month
March	Broken Snowshoe Month	Breeding Month of Raccoon
April	Maple Sugar-making Month	Month When Fish Become Visible
May	Flower Month	Drying of the Earth Month
June	Strawberry Month	Cultivating Month
July	Blueberry Month	Corn Tasseling Month
August	Wild Ricing Month	Corn Popping Month
September	Shining Leaf Month	Elk Whistling Month
October	Falling Leaf Month	Month When Deer Paw the Earth
November	Freezing Month	Deer Breeding Month
December	Little Spirit Month	Month When Deer Shed Their Horns

Chart adapted from Dave Thorson, *The Wisconsin Environmental Science Activity Notebook*, Down to Earth Publications, 1995.

Name _____ Date _____

Tribal Lands



Name _____ Date _____

Recipes

Anishinabe Manomin Naboob (Wild Rice Soup)

3–4 pounds of chicken, partridge, or venison	1/2 pound wild rice, washed and cleaned
1 medium onion, chopped	2 cups chopped carrots
2 teaspoons salt	2 cups chopped celery
2–3 quarts of water	2 cans chicken broth (optional)

1. Fill a large stockpot with the meat, onion, salt and water. Boil until stock had formed.
2. Add wild rice and vegetables. Cook until rice and vegetables are done, adding more water to cover ingredients if necessary.
3. For more flavor, add 2 cans broth when adding rice and vegetables.

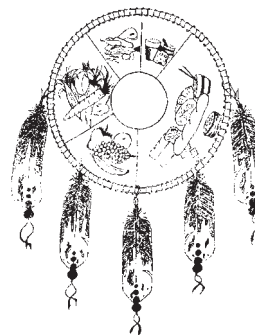
Yield: 5 quarts (20 one-cup servings)
From: Joe Chosa, Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe

Corn Casserole

1 can whole kernel corn, drained	2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 can cream style corn	1/2 cup melted margarine
8-ounce package easy cornbread mix	1 cup sour cream

1. Preheat oven to 330°.
2. In bowl, mix together all ingredients, adding sour cream last.
3. Pour into greased casserole dish. Bake 1 hour.

From: Vera Denny, Ho-Chunk



Recipes taken from: *Tribal Cooking: Traditional Stories and Favorite Recipes*, Minwanjigewin Nutrition Project
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. 1996.

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Activity 4.2: Making a Birchbark Canoe

Teacher Materials

Preparation/Organization Students will work with their own copies of Student Pages 1–2 for this activity, so be sure to make copies of these pages beforehand. You will also want to have colored pencils or crayons, scissors, and paste available. Optional materials for an enrichment activity include vegetable oil and tubs of water. After initial work with the whole class, students should be divided into small groups or allowed to work as supervised individuals. (**Note:** It is a good idea to make a sample canoe of your own beforehand that you can use as a model for students.)

Procedure

1. After students have read Chapter 4 of *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*, conduct a discussion about birchbark canoes. Use the following questions to stimulate and guide the discussion:
 - What were birchbark canoes used for?
 - What advantages did birchbark canoes have over dugout canoes?
 - Why were birchbark canoes so popular?
2. Tell students that they will be making their own models of birchbark canoes. Explain that this will be a simple paper model but that it will have the same shape as a real birchbark canoe.
3. Pass out the “Birchbark Canoe Directions” worksheet (Student Page 1). Read through the directions with the class.
4. Next, pass out the “Birchbark Canoe Cut-Out Activity Sheet” (Student Page 2), as well as crayons or colored pencils, scissors, and paste. Model following the directions to construct a canoe. Then have students make their own canoes, reminding them to follow the directions and to proceed one step at a time. Provide students with assistance as they work.
5. When students have finished, give them time to share their work. Then discuss the completed canoes, pointing out the shape and design. Also encourage students to discuss the desirable properties of birchbark canoes:
 - Made from materials that were readily available.
 - Could be mended easily if damaged.
 - Could be easily carried over areas of water that were impassable for one reason or another (too shallow, too many rapids, waterfalls, etc.).

Enrichment You might wish to extend the activity by giving students a chance to actually float their model canoes in water. First have students paint the outside of the canoes with a coating of vegetable oil. Allow time for the oil to dry. Then fill tubs with water and have students try to float their canoes.

Answers

Student canoes will vary in quality.

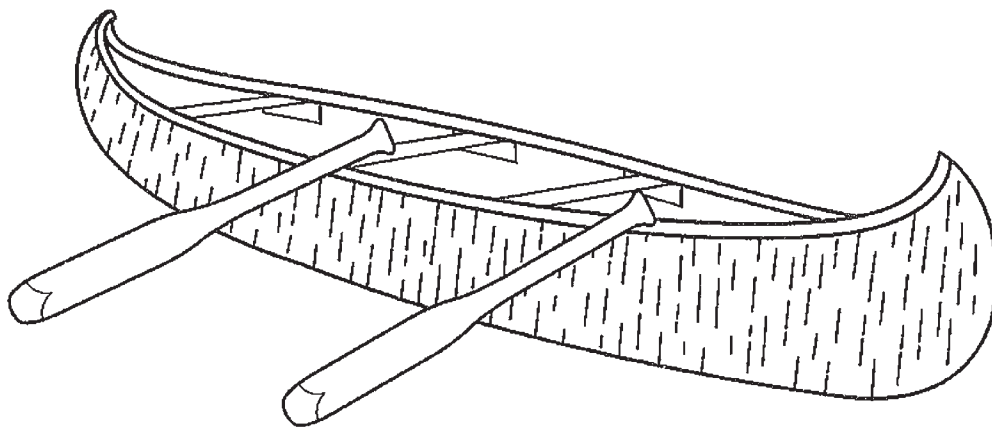
Name _____ Date _____

Activity 4.2 Making a Birchbark Canoe

Birchbark Canoe Directions

1. Use the canoe cut-out pieces on the next page and **color** the canoe pieces:
Interior (*inside*) of the canoe hull: Brown
Cross braces (*thwarts*): Brown
Paddles: Brown with Red or Yellow tips
Exterior (*outside*) of canoe hull: White
2. **Cut out** the hull. Put a thin line of glue on the edge of the bow (*front*) and press the ends together. Do the same thing with the stern (*back*) of the hull. It should start to look like a canoe.
3. **Cut out** the middle cross brace (*the longest one*) and **fold** the tab on the dotted line
4. Put a drop of glue on each dot and press to the inside middle of the hull.
5. **Cut out** the two end cross braces and **fold** each tab on the dotted line.
6. Put a drop of glue on each dot. Place one brace near the bow and place one near the stern.
7. **Fold** each paddle over on the dotted line and **glue** the paper together.
8. When the glue has dried, **cut out** the paddle shapes. **Glue** paddles to the outside of the canoe, or place them inside the canoe.

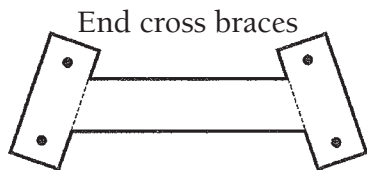
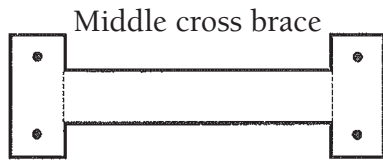
This is what your finished birchbark canoe will look like!



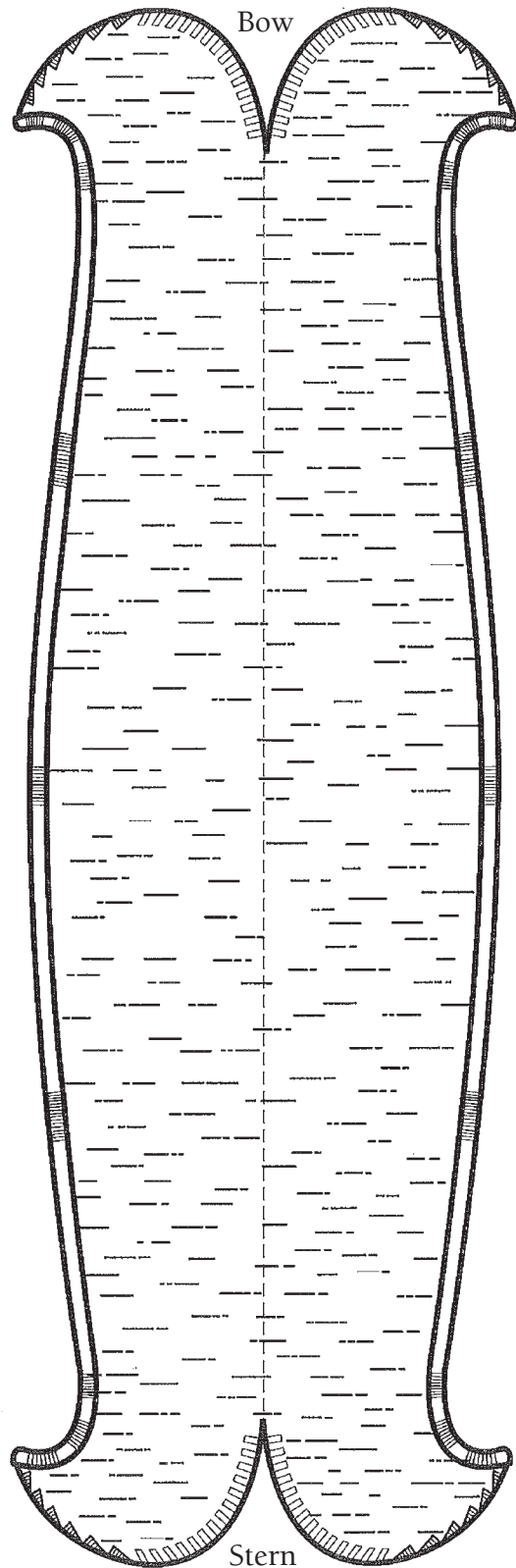
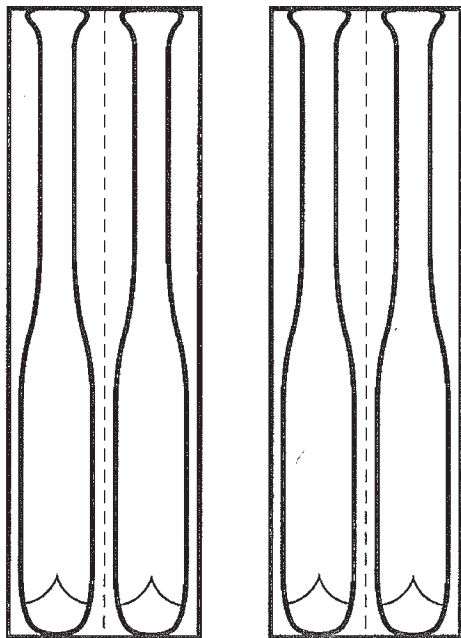
Name _____ Date _____

Birchbark Canoe Cut-out Activity Sheet

Cut out all pieces of the canoe.
Fold on all dotted lines.



Paddles



4

The Fur Trade Era: Exploration and Exchange in Wisconsin

Activity 4.3: Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now

Teacher Materials

Preparation/Organization Students will work in pairs for this activity, and each pair will need its own copy of the “Wisconsin Rivers Map” (Student Page 1) and the “Wisconsin Highways Map” (Student Page 3). (**Note:** You will also use these as transparencies.) Each student in the pair will also need his or her own copy of “Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now” (Student Page 2). Optional for each student pair are a standard Wisconsin highway map and a piece of string. A copy of “Notes from *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnaw Sotor*” (Student Page 4) will be needed for any student doing that particular enrichment activity.

Procedure

1. Begin by reviewing the basic map skills needed for the activity, including the parts of a map (compass, rose, scale, key) and cardinal directions (N, S, E, W, SE, SW, NE, NW).
2. Then divide the class into pairs. Hand out a copy of the “Wisconsin Rivers Map” (Student Page 1) to each pair and display it as a transparency. Discuss the features of the map.
3. Discuss early river travel as described in Chapter 4 of *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*. Ask:
 - Why was river travel so important to early Wisconsin people?
 - Why didn’t people travel on highways the way they do now?
4. Explain that, historically, Wisconsin people used the rivers and waterways to travel; when they had to travel from one river or waterway to another, they used short overland trails called *portages*. On the “Wisconsin Rivers Map” have students identify places where portages would have been made.
5. Tell students to imagine that they are early French fur traders at the trading post in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Remind students that they would have gone by water *all the way* from the Atlantic to Green Bay. (Have each pair find Green Bay on the map.) Explain that they now need to travel to the trading post in Prairie du Chien for a rendezvous. (Have students find the town of Prairie du Chien on the map.)
6. Give students time to discuss the travel routes with their partners. Then hand out the activity sheet “Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now” (Student Page 2). Have students work in their pairs to complete the river route, describing it on the activity sheet. Guide students as they give directions for travel, making sure they include the rivers they travel, the direction(s) they are traveling (south, north, southeast, etc.), and any portages.

7. Repeat the mapping activity using the “Wisconsin Highways Map” (Student Page 3). Have students trace the route modern travelers would take between these same two places. Guide students as they give directions for travel and write them in on the “Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now” activity sheet (Student Page 2). Make sure that students include the highways they will be using and the directions they will be taking. (**Note:** As an optional activity, you might have students calculate the *approximate* distance traveled, using string and a map scale.)
8. With the class as a whole, compare and contrast the two routes, stressing that although land travel is fast today, it was difficult and time-consuming in the past. Explain that speed was one of the reasons why traders used water routes to move heavy goods and furs.
9. Have students complete the third part of the activity sheet (Student Page 2). Suggest that partners review their sheets with each other before handing in the pages for assessment.

Enrichment You might try any of the following:

- Have students compare the speed of river travel and road travel, assuming that a canoe travels at about 5 miles per hour and a car at 60 miles per hour. What does this tell us about travel then and now?
- Interested students can find out how to get from their hometowns to Prairie du Chien and to Green Bay. Have students plan their routes on a highway map, using the Internet and other sources to find information about the cities through which they will pass. Students can then compile a list of helpful information sources (including web sites) and turn it in with their with their map routes.
- Have students read about early river travel from an authentic primary source, an edited portion of *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnaw Sotor* by George William Featherstonhaugh (Student Pages 4–5). This work was written in 1835 and published in 1847. Though it will be challenging for even the best reader, the text will provide an interesting and valuable glimpse of life in a distant time. (**Note:** The complete text can be found at the web site <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader/Contents/Voyage.html>.)
- Use some of the lessons from the United States Geological Survey to teach more about maps and map skills. Visit their web site for educators, <http://www.usgs.gov/education.html>, or their main web site, www.usgs.org. You can also call and order materials at 1-888-ASK-USGS.

Answers

Then: From Green Bay, go southwest down the Fox River, through Lake Winnebago, and continue southwest down the Fox River. When the Fox starts to loop back to the northeast, portage to the Wisconsin River and continue in a southwesterly direction down the Wisconsin all the way to Prairie du Chien.

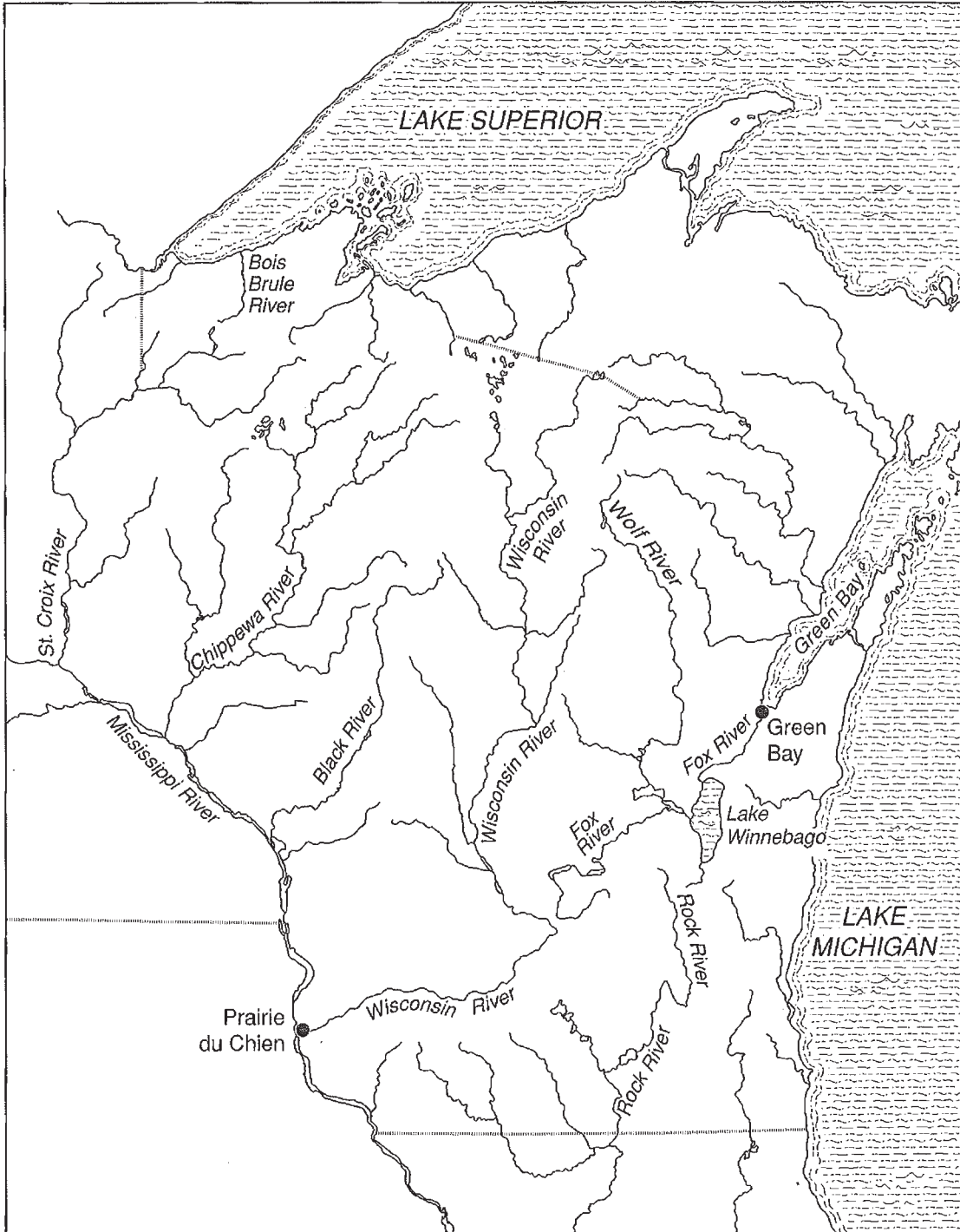
Now: From Green Bay, go southwest on Route 41, passing intersections for Routes 45 and 10. At the southern end of Lake Winnebago, take Route 151 southwest to Madison. There, take Route 18 west to Prairie du Chien.

Then and Now: The river and highway routes are the same in that they both are primarily in a southwestern direction. They differ in that the highway route today goes through towns and cities and goes somewhat farther south than the old river route. The highway route also takes considerably less time.

Name _____ Date _____

Activity 4.3 Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now

Wisconsin Rivers Map



Map by: Amelia Janes/Mike Gallagher, Midwest Educational Graphics

Name _____ Date _____

Wisconsin Travel: Then and Now

Then: Wisconsin Rivers

What river route will you take from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien? Give directions for travel and trace the route on your map. Name the waterways that will help you reach Prairie du Chien, and circle the places that you have to portage your canoe.

Now: Wisconsin Highways

What route will you take from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien? Give directions for travel and trace the route on your map. Name the highways over which you need to travel, and name some of the main cities that you will drive through to reach Prairie du Chien.

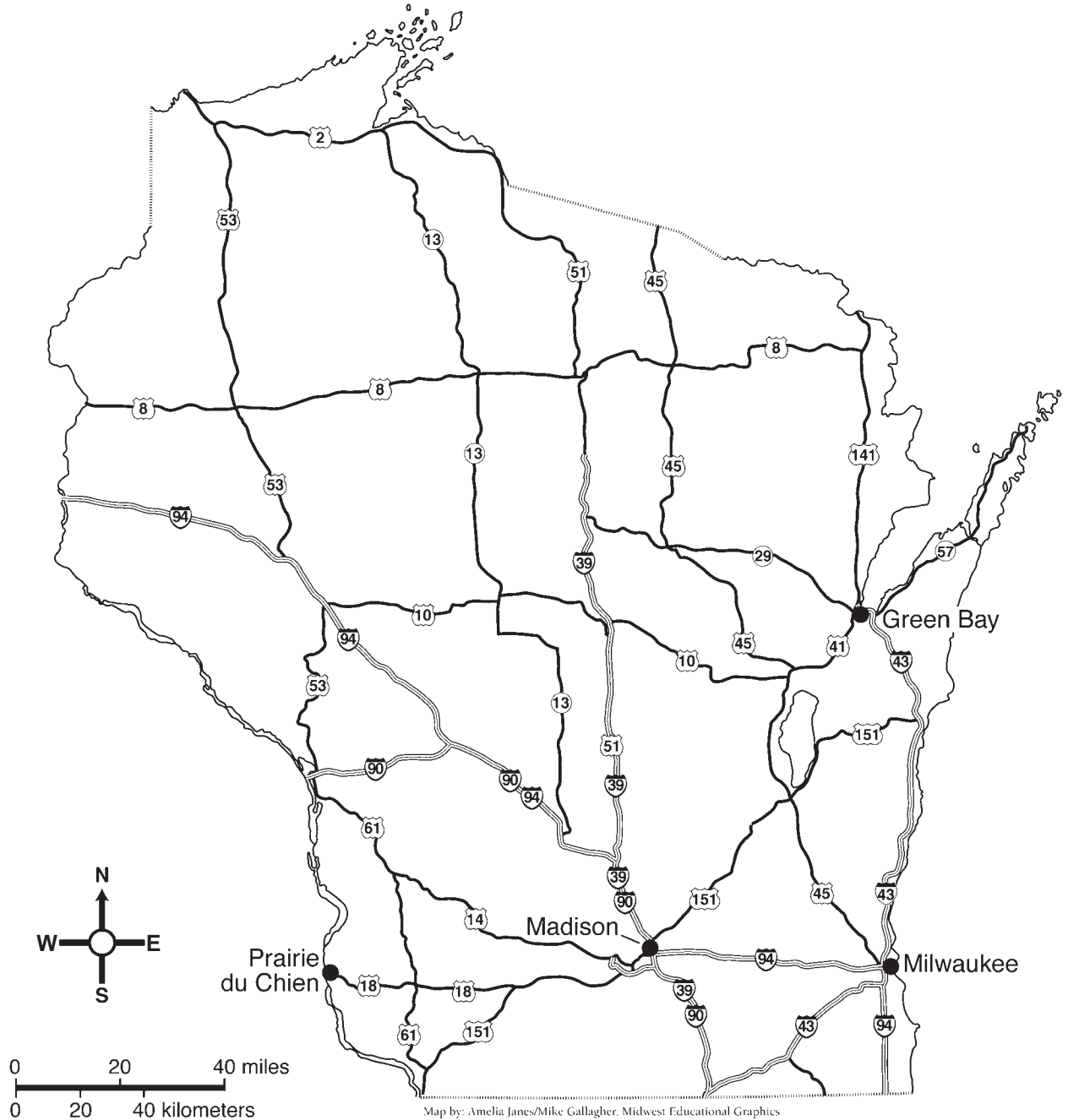
Then and Now

In what ways are the river route and highway route the same?

In what ways are the river route and highway route different?

Name _____ Date _____

Wisconsin Highways Map



Name _____ Date _____

Notes from *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor*

by George William Featherstonhaugh (Fan shaw), written in 1835

The following passages are from Chapter 19. We begin at the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers near Ft. Winnebago:

Turning my back upon the waters that flow into the Atlantic, I crossed the portage, and advanced to those that empty themselves into the Gulf of Mexico. The portage was a dead flat of black mud and sand, measuring exactly 2650 paces: it took me exactly twenty-eight minutes to walk across it. The canoe and luggage were conveyed to the shore of the Wisconsin in an ox-cart, and launched upon the river as soon as we reached it. It was a powerful black-looking stream . . . with broad sand-beaches. . . . After struggling so many days as we had against the current of Fox River . . . it was exceedingly gratifying to find ourselves, on one of the most lovely mornings imaginable, carried down stream by a strong current. . . .

At 4 P.M. we passed a picturesque-looking mass of horizontal sandstone, extending with some interruptions for about a mile, distant probably about forty miles from the portage; and at half-past five, observing a comfortable place, near to an ancient abandoned Indian village, I made, to the great joy of the men, the signal for landing. . . .

My rest was a good deal disturbed by the mosquitoes, who had taken possession of the tent; and although I was up early, we could not start for a dense fog that was upon the river. I therefore amused myself looking at the deserted wigwams near us. They were formed with nine poles, about twelve feet high, fixed into the ground in a circle, about two feet apart from each other, and their tops bent to a point and fastened together. These poles were strengthened with others interwoven round them, and the whole covered with birch bark. An Indian house of this kind . . . and with a small fire in the middle, is comfortable in the coldest weather, the smoke escaping through a hole where the poles meet. The fog began to clear away at 7 A.M., and we resumed our voyage. . . .

Soon we passed a fine stream coming in from the right bank. The country here was remarkably beautiful, the slopes of the banks gracefully wooded. . . . For a distance of about three miles the escarpments were about 250 feet [in] height, the rock every now and then jutting out. . . . I observed, too, that . . . the sandstone had been favourable to Indian talent, the figures of deer, men, and horses—sometimes well executed—being cut into it, and sometimes painted with a red bole. The swallows had availed themselves of the softness of the rock by picking holes in it, and building their nests there in innumerable quantities. . . .

August 31 . . .

Having made a hearty breakfast we got afloat again, and about 1 P.M. observed a small prairie on the right bank with some Indian mounds. . . . About 2 P.M. the river began to widen, and we were rapidly approaching the point of its confluence with the Mississippi. I could already perceive the lofty right bank of that famous stream at the end of the vista. . . . At half-past 3 P.M. we bade adieu to the charming Wisconsin, and to the enjoyment of floating upon a favourable current, having entered upon the broad surface of the Mississippi . . . and all our force was wanted to contend against the force of the descending stream. . . . We soon came in sight of Prairie du Chien, an extensive level bottom or prairie, closed in to the east by a strong rocky bluff, which was no doubt once the bank of the river. A new scene now presented itself; there was a respectable-looking military post, cattle grazing, a village, and evidences of a settled population, to which I had been for some time a stranger.

