



Drawn by Captain S. Eastman from a sketch of Itasca Lake by Henry R. Schoolcraft. Vol. 1, *Information, Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* by Henry R. Schoolcraft, 1853.

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FOREWORD

The volumes in the Bach Collection represent a collecting effort spanning seventy years. My father, Ferdinand Bach (1888-1967), bought the first book in 1917, soon after his arrival in the United States from his native Switzerland.

Father, along with many Europeans, had developed a fascination for the Native Americans. As soon as he had established a home in Michigan, he left on an extended train trip through the regions of the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming. This journey west in 1917 proved a sobering experience compared to common romantic myths and legends about the Indians and the Western frontier. He had embarked upon what would prove to be a life-long quest in search of knowledge about the Native American peoples and the land in which they lived.

A major focus of this collection is on the Old Northwest Territory and the Woodland cultures of the Native Americans of that region. The skills of the Indian tribes of the Great Lakes region, living in harmony with their environment, won the admiration of my father. Inspired by their examples, Ferdinand Bach, trained as an architect and skilled as an artist, emulated their skills of woodsmanship and became an acknowledged master in birch bark canoe building. He spent several summers with the Chippewa tribe at Golden Lake, Ontario, to perfect his skills. Two of his canoes have been donated to the State of Michigan. One is preserved at the Michigan State University Museum and one is in Fort Michilimackinac at the Straits of Mackinac. He expanded his skills into boat building and decoy carving, and he is now

recognized as a major decoy carver in the Detroit and Lake St. Clair tradition.

The study of the American Indian remained his enduring passion and he collected as much published material as was available. He was advised in building the collection by Chester A. Ellison of Lansing, Michigan, a dealer in rare books and a scholar of impeccable taste.

My interest in Father's collection was assured in the 1950s when I studied anthropology at Michigan State University. From then until his death in 1967, Father and I planned and collected together.

My wife, Beverly Small Bach, and I have placed this collection of much loved volumes with Miami University to insure that the books remain accessible to future scholars. The Walter Havighurst Special Collections, King Library, already has impressive holdings of materials on Native Americans generally and the Old Northwest Territory in particular. We wished to add to that material and give the University the most complete reference resource possible.

The dedication of the staff has assured us that future generations of readers will be able, through these volumes, to learn to better understand and appreciate the Native American.

Ferdinand Bach III
Oxford, Ohio
November 23, 1988

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