ABSTRACT

WHERE THE HELL IS CROSS VILLAGE?

by Jason Michael Sprague

This paper explores the problem of identity construction. The people, places, stories, and symbols associated with Cross Village, Michigan are used as a case study to demonstrate how communities orient themselves toward re-imagined aspects of their shared history to create an identity. This project employs historical and historiographical methods through the lens of religious studies to conduct an examination of the influences of memory, space, and myth on selective interpretations of historical events and people. The landscape, names, and memories of places change. Consequently, how place is identified and how people identify with place also change. The current residents of Cross Village have romanticized a particular reading of their past which has been reaffirmed through the process of collective memory and mythmaking. This caused the manufacture and development of nostalgia as self identity. Their notion of self is socially defined through the power and organization of language, history, and memory.
WHERE THE HELL IS CROSS VILLAGE?

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Comparative Religion
by
Jason Michael Sprague
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2010

Advisor________________________
Peter W. Williams

Reader________________________
Lisa J. M. Poirier

Reader________________________
Daniel M. Cobb
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................ III

INTRODUCTION ........................................ 1

CHAPTER 1 ........................................... 7

CHAPTER 2 ........................................... 19

CHAPTER 3 ........................................... 41

CONCLUSION ......................................... 63

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................ 67

APPENDIX ............................................ 73
List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of the regions surrounding Cross Village ................................. 8
Figure 2: Close up of the regions surrounding Cross Village ....................... 9
Figure 4: A close up of the Michilimackinac region from Figure 3 ................. 74
Figure 5: Close up of “Index Map,” from Michigan ... Route Book, 1916. Private Collection .................................................................................................................. 74
Figure 6: Painted Wequetonsing sign. Framed area to the right reads: “AT THE LITTLE BAY From Wikwedonsing, Wikwed is Ojibwa for bay” (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History) ........................................................................................................ 75
Figure 7: Fort Michilimackinac sign near the reconstructed Colonial Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City Visitor Center) ................................................................. 75
Figure 8: View of the Cross from the top of the bluff, overlooking Lake Michigan (Cross Village, MI) ........................................................................................................... 75
Figure 9: Entrance to Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery (Cross Village, MI) ................ 76
Figure 10: Sign above the entrance to the Fr. Albert Langheim, OFM Parish Center (Cross Village, MI) ........................................................................................................... 77
Figure 11: Portrait of Our Lady of Victory (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History) ........ 78
Figure 12: Annual Holy Cross Pow Wow Poster (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History) 78
Figure 13: Annual Holy Cross Picnic Poster (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History) ...... 79
Figure 14: Father John B. Weikamp’s crypt (Cross Village, MI) ...................... 79
INTRODUCTION

Much of the charm of the early days has passed with the years. Today one seldom hears the guttural language of the early inhabitants. If a foreign tongue is heard, it may prove to be the speech of city residents who have transformed Indian dwellings into summer homes. The chance visitor in his quest for greater knowledge of the lore of his country sees few landmarks here and learns little of the past, for there are few to tell it. He goes on his way unsatisfied, feeling that there must be something here which has eluded him.

Mary Belle Shurtleff, *Old Arbre Croche*

Nestled along a bluff overlooking the northwestern shore of Lake Michigan is the small community of Cross Village, Michigan. It has a charm about it that intrigues most visitors and keeps longtime residents. Cross Village, and the region surrounding it, has been utilized and perceived in a variety of ways. This is reflected in how its history is told. Leslie M. Silko, discussing Pueblo narratives in relation to land, states:

> The stories cannot be separated from geographical locations, from actual physical locations within the land…. And the stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose the stories because there are so many imposing geological elements . . . you cannot *live* in that land without asking or looking at or noticing a boulder or rock. And there’s always a story."

Mythmaking, the re-telling of culturally, historically, and religiously significant stories, can be seen as a strong individual and communal identifier and as a means by which residents may connect to a community’s past and the physical place it occupies.

Stories people tell about themselves, and how these stories are remembered, are used as a means of constructing identity and orienting individuals and a community to the world around them. This sense of identity and orientation is tied to places, events, historic figures, and particular material objects and symbols. There are important issues

---

1 “Where the Hell is Cross Village?” is not only meant to express geographic location, but a larger orientation. Cross Village is the point from which the residents look at the larger world. They construct their identity based on their local notions of themselves in relationship to the larger world. Where Cross Village is historically, economically, socially, politically, and religiously can all be expressed in this simple question. This question also demonstrates the importance of material objects and the manner in which the people wish to convey themselves to others.

of perspective that one must consider when looking at events and history. One should consider different approaches to studying local and regional history as well as putting the specific aspects of that history into context by thinking of the people on their own terms. This makes any project into local or regional history both multi-dimensional and complex. Therefore, I think one should study things that matter right now, in the current world, that are of some benefit to the people being studied.

The area known today as Cross Village, Michigan has been imagined, constructed, and re-appropriated as a sacred space in various ways throughout its lengthy history. The space has been primarily utilized by Native Americans, Catholics of various traditions, and recently a growing tourist and seasonal resident population. Cross Village was reconstructed as a sacred space due to the Catholic presence in the region through perceptions of landscape, interactions with material objects, important events, people, and building structures. This Catholic sense of the sacred has then been diffused and re-imagined throughout the entire Cross Village community into an unusual blurring of sacred and profane notions of space.

The people, places, and symbols associated with Cross Village, Michigan have been imagined and remembered throughout history by various people and in various ways that have shaped the identities of the current residents of the village. This implies that the past is not static but alive. The past not only contributes to the ways in which people imagine the present, it is also contested, constructed, and often contradictory. Different groups of people viewed the region around Cross Village differently depending on many factors. The landscape, names, and memories changed. Consequently, how the place is identified and how people identify with the place also changed. Those memories that do remain are due to the retelling of stories tied to the village and the region. The degree to which memories are internalized widely is a window not so much on the validity of the memories, but of who has the right to make memory “real.”

has been defined throughout history by various Native people, and later various non-
Native immigrants to the region. I argue that the current residents of Cross Village have
constructed their identity(s) by orienting themselves toward particular aspects of their
history. This identity construction and orientation is intimately tied to materiality,
symbols, places, events, and historic figures that played a significant role in the past and
continue to do so in the present. In order to understand how this identity is constructed I
will look at how stories about place are perceived and retold.

I will be examining the importance of materiality, symbolism, events, historic
figures, and the importance of place to find how these characteristics of a culture have
played, and continue to play, a role in the construction, invention, or imagining of a
religious history for the residents of Cross Village, Michigan. My goal is for the readers,
both scholars of religion and residents of Cross Village, to better understand the use of
the characteristics mentioned above as catalysts for identity construction and orientation
for the current residents of Cross Village.

Current residents of Cross Village have constructed or imagined their history
using romanticized, hagiographical, and mythic stories as a way of creating or validating
their place in the world. How much of this history is “factual” as opposed to “invented”;
and how crucial or important is this distinction when it concerns the stories a community
tells about themselves, today, in relationship to the past? In other words, does the origin,
purity, or authenticity of a story matter to the researcher or the community being studied,
or is the use of the story within the community what is important? Also, why have no
recent historical texts been written concerning the modern history of the village and the
region?

This project concerns the role colonialism plays in the process of these
constructions, such as the development of hybridity. In order to complete this project I
will examine what I consider to be the proper ways to go about studying the regional and
local history of a people. In other words, I will try to discover what benefit this project

State University of New York, 1993), as well as the work of Barry Schwartz concerning events and
Forces 61, no. 2 (December 1982): 374-402. I apply the work of each theorist to the role of memory and
history in relationship to place, identity, and authenticity in the context of Cross Village.
may have for the community being studied and what the larger implications are for American society by studying localized societies and cultures.

Throughout this work I will examine the important roles stories, myths, and legends play for the current residents of Cross Village. The stories told by these residents reveal how they construct their identity and orient themselves to the world. Key elements in these stories include materiality, symbolism, events, historical figures, and place. This work is significant to the field of religious studies because the project deals primarily with sacred memories utilized for the process of mythmaking as a form of individual and communal identity construction. I will be examining how myths and stories are constructed, and I will investigate the ways in which these narratives impact a community’s sense of history, identity, and orientation. Additionally, I will demonstrate the importance of place, place-naming, and perceptions of landscape as a way of constructing a sacred space. To illustrate the dynamics of place-naming and landscape perception, I will attend to the ways in which maps and written descriptions of the location and landscape have been perceived and have changed over time. My analysis will involve a thorough and critical examination of how specific nineteenth century documents were constructed, for what purposes they were created, and how they were later interpreted in the twentieth century and beyond.

Chapter one will consist mostly of historical background. Overall, it will provide the reader with basic knowledge of my subject by means of a comparison of various accounts and records. I will describe the geography of the region, various descriptions of the importance of the landscape, and general information concerning the area centered on Cross Village. This region and its histories are significant because they impact the local history of Cross Village in a variety of meaningful ways. Additionally, I will provide information about the tribes in the area prior to colonial contact, focusing on the myths of the Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa. The information I provide will largely concern tribal migrations and the impact of initial colonial contact. This will also introduce the reader to various French Jesuit missionaries, traders, and explorers, and their impact on the region. By providing the reader with the most important dates, events, and people I will provide a basic outline of the history of the region.
Chapter two will address the methods that have been applied to the study of regional and local histories. I will incorporate the theories that have been developed to explain how communities construct identity based on stories concerning their history. This will focus on how people perceive Native Americans and landscape. To do this I will demonstrate how theorists such as Helen Tanner and Keith Basso have interpreted maps and stories. In addition, I will show how memory plays a role in the construction of a community’s history. I will address the main theme of identity construction and orientation in order to bring the whole chapter back into the larger framework.

Chapter three will examine the current residents of the area through the methodological lenses introduced in the previous chapter. Here I will examine how, why, and what stories are told and what significance these stories have for current residents in their identity construction and orientation. In order to show the importance of stories I will examine the importance of materiality, such as the tree and the cross. I will also highlight the importance of certain religious and historical figures, such as Father Jacques Marquette and Bishop Frederic Baraga, in order to show how stories told about these individuals can be identifiers for communities today. Additionally, I will show the connection between place-naming and perceptions of landscape. I will problematize contemporary constructions of identity by critically examining recent writings that draw upon previous historical accounts.

The conclusion will address the importance this work has for the field of religion, and for the residents of the region. I will show how the methods I employed and the research I did can be used to study other local and regional religious myths and stories. I wish for the reader to get a sense that we as Americans need to critically examine and view the interrelated elements of religion, memory, history, and geography.

This project addresses the ways in which current residents of Cross Village, Michigan are constructing their group and individual identities and orienting themselves to the environment and landscape around them by creating a sense of historical memory through retellings of stories, myths, and legends. I examine how particular elements within these stories such as materiality, symbols, events, descriptions of landscape, place naming, and narratives concerning historic individuals factor into this identity. I endeavor to show how current perceptions of the self are intimately tied to views of the
past and to how history is constructed and remembered. Key themes that arise in these perceptions include the portrayal of Native people in the stories being told, the continuing impact of colonial contact, and significant events. The significant events that play a role in the region’s history vary depending on who is telling the story. For example, romanticization of Native people is common when Euro-Americans construct narratives about the area. I am less concerned with factuality or reliability of narrative than I am with what is imagined, constructed, and erased. I also attend to issues of agenda and audience. The significance of Native American history for non-Native residents and the nostalgic development of the past raise a number of important issues in the analysis of local histories. I also have a particular concern regarding the roles that Native people themselves play in the construction, perception, and critique of such narratives.

My goal throughout this work is to discover more about the intricate interplay of Native American history, religious studies, and local history. Access to primary source materials, exposure to new secondary source areas, and interaction with scholars with differing perspectives has certainly aided my understanding of both the larger contexts and the particularities of my research. I remain committed to the goal of sharing my research with both Native and non-Native communities in the Cross Village area, and part of this commitment entails focusing on what matters to them. I hope to bring their concerns to this experience as well.
CHAPTER 1

When Detroit was a lifeless waterway and Chicago was only a name for wild garlic, Michilimackinac was a center of dominion and power. A wilderness capital, known only to a few thousand half-clothed savages, it became part of the history of France, England and the United States

Walter Havighurst, *Three Flags at the Straits*

Understanding the geography of Michigan is a key factor in understanding the people who dwell there. It is a complex region with a rich history of interactions and movements of people. Due to this complexity it is not a region that is easily understood simply through written descriptions. As Helen Tanner explains, “Within the area of the Great Lakes and upper Ohio River valley, the disruption of Indian life has been so extensive and so frequent that the history can be clarified only with the visual aid of maps.”

Therefore, one must interpret how others have depicted the region including and surrounding Michigan through the use of the images they created as well as modern concepts of the region.

An important resource in the study of the Michigan region is Walter Romig’s book *Michigan Place Names*. Its introductory paragraph is very telling of how the author views Michigan and how he believes it should be viewed:

*Michigan Place Names* is far more than a compilation of geographical facts, however. The book is a key that unlocks the romantic story of Michigan’s geographical origins. Like a gigantic patchwork quilt, bits and snippets of Michigan’s colorful heritage adorn the roadsides across the state. From Ahmeek to Zilwaukie, to say nothing of Hell, Hooker, and Home, community names preserve the stories of Indian chiefs, famous statesmen, pioneer settlers, ethnic groups, world events, far-off battlefields, and half-forgotten historical episodes.

From this description one can see that it is not only the place itself that is important, but what stories have been told about and in that place, what people

---

Footnotes:
5 See Figs. 3-4 in Appendix.
have been and are there, and what events have occurred there. In order to understand the place one must understand the history associated with it.

To understand the history of the people of Cross Village, one must first understand the influences the history of the surrounding region has had on constructions of local history. In order to do this I have broken down the regions surrounding Cross Village into five distinct yet overlapping areas, in both geographical and historical importance. Starting in the north and moving south is the Sault Sainte Marie region, the Michilimackinac region, the L’Arbre Croche region, the Little Traverse Bay region, and the Grand Traverse Bay region.
Figure 2: Close up of the regions surrounding Cross Village

Sault Sainte Marie was the first European settlement to be constructed in what is now Michigan. Sault Sainte Marie was named in 1641 for the heights overlooking the rapids (in French, sault) and in honor of the Virgin Mary. The famous French Jesuit Jacques Marquette established a mission there in 1668. John Johnston, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s father-in-law, became the first British settler in 1793. Michigan’s first governor, Lewis Cass, raised the Stars and Stripes over Sault Ste. Marie in 1820. The region was first called Le Sault de Sainte Marie, but was shortened to its present form in 1823. It was incorporated as the village of St. Mary in 1849, but the act creating it was annulled in 1851. It was re-incorporated as Sault Ste. Marie in 1879 and is typically referred to as “the Soo” today.  

The name Michilimackinac is used for the general area of the straits between the lower and upper peninsulas of Michigan. The original Ojibwe name Michilimackinac, or ‘Great Turtle’ simply referred to present day Mackinac Island. However, the French applied the name to the area around current day St. Ignace on the tip of the Upper Peninsula, also known as Fort de Baude or Ancient Fort Mackinac, from 1671-1697. 

---

7 Schoolcraft was the Indian agent for the Michigan Territory throughout the 1820s and 30s. He wrote extensively on his interactions with the Native people of the area. His significance will be elaborated upon later.

This name later expanded to encompass present day Mackinaw City on the tip of the Lower Peninsula, from 1715-1780. Michilimackinac, referring to Mackinac Island, was occupied by the various colonial powers, with the name transferring with each occupation. It was occupied by the British from 1780-1795, the Americans from 1795-1812, the British from 1812-1815, and the Americans from 1815 to the present.\(^9\)

The L’Arbre Croche region stretches from Cross Village in the north to Harbor Springs in the south. The area was first called Waganakisi, or ‘Crooked Tree,’ by the Ottawa. The French ‘L’Arbre Croche’ expresses this same meaning. Later the region became known as Anamiewatigoing, or ‘At the Tree of Prayer,’ by the Ottawa around 1799. The French term La Croix expresses a similar meaning but refers more specifically to ‘The Cross.’ Around 1830 the town of Cross Village became known as Old L’Arbre Croche as Harbor Springs grew to be known as New L’Arbre Croche. Cross Village was later referred to as La Croix from 1847 until 1875 when it took on the current name of Cross Village.\(^10\)

One of the best summaries of the history of naming the region comes from Mary Belle Shurtleff in her book *Old Arbre Croche: A Factual and Comprehensive History:*

To place in chronological order the names by which Cross Village has been known in the course of its history is a difficult task, since these names are in three languages and more than one was in use at the same time. The region around the village was undoubtedly first known as Waganakisi, the Ottawa word for crooked tree, which was applied to a scattered Indian settlement extending along the shore from Cross Village to Harbor Springs. At the same period this Ottawa settlement was called L’Arbre Croche by the white traders. These names were given to the region because of a tall crooked fir tree which stood on the bluff a few miles north of Middle Village.

When, at some early date, a large cross was erected on the bluff at Cross Village the Indians called the village Anamiewatigoing, meaning at the tree of prayer or cross. This still remains the Indian name for the town. About 1830, when a mission was established at Harbor Springs, the southernmost point of L’Arbre Croche, Cross Village was known as Old Arbre Croche to distinguish it from Harbor Springs, which the missionaries then called New Arbre Croche, or simply Arbre Croche. By

---


\(^10\) Romig, 251, 438-39, 559. For a map of the described regions see Fig. 5 in Appendix.
1847 the name LaCroix was also in use. This name was retained until 1875 when it was changed to the present form.11

In fact, Romig’s *Michigan Place Names*, as well as numerous other sources, draw on Shurtleff’s chronology of place names of Cross Village. She appears to be viewed as a trusted resource due to the continued use of her work.12

The Little Traverse Bay region, centered on the current cities of Petoskey and Harbor Springs, was first named Wequetonsing or Wababikang, meaning ‘At the Little Bay,’ by the Ottawa.13 When the French arrived the region took on the name La Petite Traverse, or ‘The Little Crossing.’ It was known by this name from 1827-1881 until it took on the name Little Traverse Bay. The city of Petoskey itself was first named Bear Creek and then Porter’s Village in 1857. From 1873 to the present it has been known as Petoskey, which is a corruption of the Ottawa word Petosega, or ‘The Rising Sun.’ The city of Harbor Springs was known by the French name L’Arbre Croche beginning in 1742. It became Harbor Springs in 1881 and is sometimes called Bayfield.14

The Grand Traverse Bay region, centered on the current city of Traverse City, was first named La Grande Traverse, or ‘The Great Crossing,’ by the French. Later, the Ottawa name Wequetong, or ‘Head of the Bay’ was applied briefly to the region from 1851-1854. The region has typically been referred to as Grand Traverse Bay ever since.

In order to set the stage for current perceptions of Native Americans in the region it is important to have a general historical understanding of the Native Americans in the area, and in particular their histories and interactions with the French and neighboring tribes. The traditional histories of the Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa say that they were once one tribe. They came from the Eastern seaboard at an unknown date and split ways at the straits around the sixteenth century with “the Ottawas remaining at the strait, the Chippewas migrating to the north and west, and the Potawatomis moving down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Since the Potawatomis continued to keep the council

---

13 See Fig. 6 in Appendix.
14 Romig, 140-41, 251.
fire of the originally united tribes, they received their name as ‘Keepers of the Fire,’ or Fire Nation.” However, archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests that the tribes may have split before this time. 

According to Helen Tanner, from 1641 to the 1870s there were three basic types of Native Americans in the region: residents, refugees, and temporary allies. Residents were those tribes living in their original homeland; for instance, the Ottawa in the straits region, the Ojibwa surrounding Lake Superior, and the Potawatomi in the southwestern portion of the Lower Peninsula. Refugees were those tribes pushed out of their original homelands for various reasons and were forced to live in the lands of other tribes. For instance, the Mahican from New England were living with the Potawatomi and the Miami in the southern Lake Michigan area before 1700. Temporary allies were tribes that allied themselves with each other for short periods of time in reaction to a particular set of circumstances; for instance, war with other tribes and trade with the French and other tribes.

Many tribes became refugees after the Hodenosaunee invaded the region beginning in 1641 with their newly acquired guns. The first large scale invasion of the Hodenosaunee into the western Lake Michigan region occurred in 1655 but failed when the Hodenosaunee were unable to acquire sufficient amounts of food. The Hodenosaunee suffered a defeat by the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Nipissing at Iroquois Point, Michigan (near Sault Sainte Marie) in 1662. The final flight of the Ottawa and Wendat (escaping the Dakota) occurred in 1671 in which they went to Michilimackinac and established a major population at St. Ignace. This can be broken down further:

“The Iroquois Wars 1641-1701”
1651- Ottawa, Tionontati, Wendat on Mackinac Island
1655, 1662 – Iroquois defeated near Saulte Sainte Marie by Ojibwa

---

16 Edmunds, 4.
17 Tanner, 2.
18 Tanner, 2.
19 Tanner, 30.
20 Tanner, 31.
21 Tanner, 31.
22 Tanner, 31.
23 Tanner, 32-33.
1668 – Saulte Sainte Marie founded (Ottawa in area). Bawating was the name of Ottawa village\textsuperscript{24}.
1670-71 – smallpox epidemic in straits area (Ottawa and Ojibwa)\textsuperscript{25}
1671 – St. Ignace founded (Ottawa in area)
1672 – Ottawa, Tionontati, Wendat in Michilimackinac (St. Ignace)

The Potawatomi were potentially the first Native American inhabitants (not including the mound builders) of the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan, and they lived in semi permanent villages composed of wigwams. During the winter months they would split into smaller bands and temporary camps to hunt for food. They were known to hunt, gather, and farm.\textsuperscript{26} According to scholars like David Edmunds and Helen Tanner, the Potawatomi began vacating the Lower Peninsula around 1641, moving into eastern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and southwestern Michigan, where they were encountered by later French explorers. When the Iroquois obtained guns they invaded Potawatomi lands, driving the Potawatomi north and west along the shores of Lake Michigan. The Potawatomi then encountered the Sioux and were driven back east. When the Jesuits arrived in 1642 some of the Potawatomi were living among the Ojibwe in the Sault Saint Marie region.\textsuperscript{27}

During the early 1650s the Potawatomi moved into the Green Bay region once occupied by the now nearly exterminated Winnebagos. However, they still regular traded with their Ottawa neighbors and often stayed for extended periods of time.\textsuperscript{28} It was during one of these extended visits in the 1660s that “Father Claude Allouez, a Jesuit missionary among the Ottawas, described the Potawatomis as ‘warlike,’ but commented that they were more friendly to the French than any of the other tribes he had encountered.”\textsuperscript{29} This description denotes another negative portrayal of Native people in the region. During times of expansion by European powers Native people were pushed out of many of the lands they previously inhabited. Depicting the Native people in a negative light helped to validate their removal and extermination. However, some

\textsuperscript{24} Tanner, 36-37.
\textsuperscript{25} Tanner, 170-71.
\textsuperscript{26} Edmunds, 4.
\textsuperscript{27} Edmunds, 4.
\textsuperscript{28} Edmunds, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{29} Edmunds, 6.
explorers, traders, and missionaries did develop closer bonds to the Native people of the region and were able to notice positive attributes as well.

In the introduction to Edna Kenton’s book she provides a description of the Native Americans in the Great Lakes region from an account by Reuben Thwaites.

These savages were rude in life and manners, were intensely warlike, depended for subsistence chiefly on hunting and fishing, lived in rude wigwams covered with bark, skins, or matted reeds, practiced agriculture in a crude fashion, and were less stable in their habitations than the Southern Indians. They have made a larger figure in our history than any other family, because through their lands came the heaviest and most aggressive movement of white population, French or English.  

30 This description portrays the Native people of the region as “uncivilized.” It is a biased view that makes a clear separation between “self” and “other.”

31 This is an obviously problematic and Euro-centric view of Native people.

32 I will go further into notions and portrayals of “civilization” later. I will go into the meaning of both of these concepts later.

On August 12 and 13, 1995 the community of Cross Village held its 300th anniversary celebration. This celebration was designated as a homecoming and thanksgiving, encompassing the entire community with activities for a wide variety of people. This was not just a Catholic event, but an event for everyone from the area. From a purely Catholic perspective this event could be viewed as sacred. Masses were held, there were pilgrimages to sites of mission churches and cemeteries, and tours of grave sites and the museum, where relics and artifacts were displayed. For Catholics and non-Catholics alike there was music, fireworks, a parade, Polish and Native American meals, and crafts and trade goods being sold.

Cross Village marks the beginning of its history, by some accounts, from 1691 when French Jesuit missionaries established the first Catholic missionary church, though missionaries and fur traders had been in the area for a few decades prior. This first church was a simple wigwam, typical of the Native American dwellings in the area. It had a large cross set outside it to mark it as a church. The site was chosen because it was already a meeting place for various Native American tribes in the region. It soon became a booming center for missionary activity and the fur trade. As settlers moved north into

31 I will go further into notions and portrayals of “civilization” later.
32 I will go into the meaning of both of these concepts later.
the region there were a number of conflicts among the French, British, Americans, and Indians from the mid eighteenth century until the early nineteenth century when the Americans firmly established control of the region. From the 1820s on, the Indian population declined as more and more Americans drove them out in the grab for land. Cross Village became an important location for the booming lumber industry in the state at this time. However, this lucrative business soon dried up, culminating in the great fire of September 28, 1918, which ravaged the entire town; an event from which the town never recovered. Prior to this event the town had a population of around 1000. It is nearly a ghost town today. Empty plots of land are still laid out on street grids, further adding to the sense of vacancy in the village today. In the last few decades the village has survived as a resort community for tourists and seasonal residents who come to Cross Village to enjoy the pleasant and secluded summers on the lake. It is also a stopping point for bikers along the Tunnel of Trees, a notoriously wooded and windy stretch of M119.

Cross Village is located on the shores of Lake Michigan on the northwest coast of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, approximately twenty miles south of the Mackinac Bridge that spans the two peninsulas, and twenty miles north of the city of Harbor Springs. It is an isolated rural community of around three hundred residents, mostly of European descent, with a minority of Odawa Indians. Most of the residents today are a mixture of upper class seasonal residents, often referred to by the locals as “implants,” and older lower middle class residents whose families have lived in the area for generations. There are few families and those of the younger generation who still call this place home.

Cross Village, Michigan, and the region surrounding it, has been used and perceived in a variety of ways. This is reflected in how its history is told. Early seventeenth century accounts of this region and the people within it were concerned with exploration, trade, and missionary work. Much of this material comes from the writings of and about early French explorers and Jesuit missionaries. Often they are one and the same or accompany each other, such as the French Jesuit missionary Jacques Marquette. Much of the writing from this time is hagiographical, showing that these writings depicting saintly figures reveal the audience and agenda of those writing. Collections of writings such as The Jesuit Relations at this time reveal that those recording these
encounters were writing primarily for approval and funding from those back in France. It is often difficult to attribute authorship to these writings because there are multiple and conflicting accounts, so much of it is unreliable as historical data but is revealing of the attitudes and aspirations of the time. The French viewed themselves as part of a civilizing process and the Indians as backwards savages in need of rescue.\(^{33}\)

It was in the mid to late eighteenth century that this French dominance and view of the region shifted, with increased warfare between European colonizers and the intrusion of the British. Indians were now viewed as either potential allies or enemies. The relationship between the Europeans and the landscape became one of physical dominance and control. Government entities increased their pressures on the Indians and sought to exterminate or drive them from the land. One important event in particular highlights this tenuous relationship.

It was a warm and sunny day at Fort Michilimackinac on June 2, 1763. On this day at the British outpost on the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan the Asakiwaki and Ojibwe were engaged in a game of lacrosse. Canadians, soldiers, and Natives looked on as a ferocious battle unfolded before the gates of the fort. As the game raged on, to the delight of the spectators, a group of women wrapped in blankets moved closer to the gates. Suddenly, the ball was thrown near the gates with the Natives in pursuit; however, the ball was no longer the object of attention. The Natives yelled war cries and grabbed weapons hidden beneath the women’s blankets. The Natives entered the fort, taking the soldiers off guard. All the inhabitants of the fort were either massacred or taken prisoner.

The story of the massacre at Fort Michilimackinac is one that is commonly told and recorded in the history books. The description by Alexander Henry, one of the captives, in *Travels of Alexander Henry, 1760-1764*, is generally considered the best account of this tragic event.\(^{34}\) Today visitors to the reconstructed Colonial Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City will witness reenactments and hear a version of this


important event in Michigan history. However, the events that transpired soon after the massacre are not told, recorded, or remembered, yet played an even more important role in shaping this region for generations to come.

With the Natives in possession of the fort the captives were placed in canoes and transported twenty miles down the coast of Lake Michigan. Their destination was present day Beaver Island, where they were to meet an uncertain, but most likely unpleasant, fate. But on this day a dense fog forced the Ojibwe captors to hug the shoreline near present day Cross Village, Michigan. It was there that the Odawa, whose territory the Ojibwe had entered, took possession of the captives. After a brief council it was agreed that the captives would be returned to the British in Montreal. Soon after, a peaceful delegation of Odawa Indians, with their captives in tow, departed on their mission.

On August thirteenth, a mere two months after the massacre, the Odawa delegation arrived in Montreal with the remaining captives from Fort Michilimackinac. They were given a warm reception, returned the captives, and left for home with a gift of unthinkable destruction from Sir Jeffrey Amherst (The Governor General of British North America at the time). Contained in a little tin box, which the Odawa were instructed not to open until they arrived home, was a collection of ground up smallpox scabs.

The epidemic that followed nearly wiped out the Odawa tribe. Their dominance in the region was shattered and their weakened state opened the door for later colonial expansion into the area. This genocide and near destruction of an entire people was not recorded in written history because no Europeans were there to witness it. Due to the effects of Pontiac’s War in the region there were no Englishmen left in this area of the Great Lakes outside of Detroit. The only proof that this genocide ever took place is in the oral stories and scattered bones of the Odawa people. It wasn’t until 1887, well over one hundred years after the massacre, that Andrew J. Blackbird recorded the story in his History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan. Mary Belle Shurtleff makes a brief reference to the event in Old Arbre Croche, but does not explain where she obtained the information from. Her account is as follows:

35 See Fig. 7 in Appendix.
One legend which recurs persistently claims that the English, angered because of the part the Indians played in assisting the French in the French and Indian War, gave one of the chiefs a small box to be opened after he had returned home. Soon after the box, which contained small-pox germs, was opened, a terrible epidemic almost exterminated the tribe. As if to vouch for the veracity of this story, there have been found old Indian cemeteries in Michigan which give evidence of hasty mass burials such as the epidemic might necessitate.  

It wasn’t until 2007 that the evidence from oral tradition, Amherst’s letters, and the accounts by Henry and Blackbird were compiled and analyzed in Constance Cappel’s book *The Smallpox Genocide of the Odawa Tribe at L’Arbre Croche 1763*. The largest bioterrorist attack on American soil, this significant erasure of American history, has only recently come to light.

The mid to late eighteenth century view of the Native population held by the British persisted into the early nineteenth century when the scholarship concerning the region and the people reacted directly to this previous policy. By the early nineteenth century the government of the United States had firm control over the region and continued to take a controlling and aggressive stance toward the people and the landscape. Much of the nineteenth century literature is by those traveling on the government’s behalf as translators, Indian affairs agents, or mineral and lumber prospectors. These writers, like John Tanner and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, had romanticized notions of landscape and the people within it. The style of writing suggests that the Native people of the region were viewed as disappearing and in need of having some elements of their culture recorded and saved to preserve a piece of America that once existed. This usually resulted in the writers trying to record what they believed to be the least tainted by European incursions.

---

36 Shurtleff, 6.
CHAPTER 2

Power demands wisdom, which is attested by the capacity to interpret.

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*

Religion is a key ingredient in the colonial situation. Charles Long defines religion “as a kind of power, for at the heart of these kinds of movements the nature of power is central.” Therefore, religion in the colonial context is a way of exerting power upon the land and the people who dwell upon it. As George Tinker explains in *Missionary Conquest,* “colonization names a complex category. Historically, it identifies a political subunit of people who move away from their home territory to a territory some distance away but nevertheless remain under the political jurisdiction of their home territory.” This is a very technical definition of colonization but it will serve the purposes of this project. Religions, myths, and power relationships develop within this colonial context.

When analyzing the history of Cross Village one should consider it in terms of contact situations in what Homi Bhabha identifies as a “Third Space.” By “Third Space” Bhabha means more than just the physical landscape where cultures collide, but the temporal, spatial, and social elements concerned as well. Within this “Third Space” hybridity develops. Hybridity is a new creation that results when two cultures come in contact with one another. Hybridity is a combination of the two cultures yet something new in itself.

Richard White considers this understanding of colonialism in his book *The Middle Ground* to explain what happens in the Great Lakes region. “Contact was not a battle of primal forces in which only one could survive. Something new could appear.”

---

White develops what he calls the “middle ground” to refer to “the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages. It is a place where many of the North American subjects and allies of empires lived. It is the area between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat.”

In this context White considers the development and eventual breakdown of accommodation as opposed to acculturation. By acculturation he means “a process in which one group becomes more like another by borrowing discrete cultural traits. Acculturation proceeds under conditions in which a dominant group is largely able to dictate correct behavior to a subordinate group.” This is a very similar definition to what has been called syncretism. I will use hybridity in place of accommodation and “Third Space” in place of “middle ground” for the purposes of this project, since I consider them relatively interchangeable.

White goes on to state that, “they [the French] were becoming cocreators of a world in the making. The world that had existed before they arrived was no more. It had been shattered. Only fragments remained.” Much of this shattering was due to disease and Iroquois attacks, which can both be traced back to European colonization. It is what happens to these “fragments” that will be the focus of this project. White goes on to explain what happens with these “fragments:” “But most Algonquians did not disappear. Instead, together with Frenchmen, they pieced together a new world from shattered pieces. They used what amounted to an imported imperial glue to reconstruct a village world …The fragments are the history. It is, therefore, a world best initially perceived in fragments, as both Algonquians and Frenchmen perceived it and tried to make sense of its danger, strangeness, and horror.” “In these fragments of contact and change are glimpses of both a world in disorder and the attempts of people to reorder it through an amalgam of old and new logics.” In this context many people are clustered together at certain points to avoid the Iroquois and the Sioux. The Michilimackinac region becomes one of the main clusters.

---

42 White, x.  
43 White, x.  
44 White, x.  
45 White, 1.  
46 White, 2.  
47 White, 10-11.
Out of the chaotic Michilimackinac region a few individuals rise to take up prominent roles in a new society created from fragments of the old. Many of these individuals were Jesuit missionaries sent to the New World to spread the message of the Catholic Church. Particular historic and religious figures and types of figures are often used as exemplars of a way of life. The individuals that play the most prominent role in a community’s stories are typically the ones who have had the most impact in shaping the historic progression of the people and the area. The figures take on mythic qualities and become remembered for representing an archetype. However, that does not mean that particular aspects of their lives lose importance, but rather, they fit into the larger narrative of their life that was significant for the position they fill in history.

Perhaps the most notable of these men was Father Jacques Marquette, who established Michigan’s first permanent settlement at Sault Sainte Marie in 1668, and another mission at the Straits of Michilimackinac in 1671. Marquette later explored the Mississippi River and his notes shed light on the dark northern wilderness, enabling more people to come.48

It is from many of these notable European figures that we get a sense of how the Native people and the region were viewed. It is their accounts and the stories about them that become the building blocks for later constructions of history.

Their interactions with Native people were recorded in an effort to elevate Euro-American and Christian ideals at the expense of the Native people by depicting Native people as culturally inferior. Tinker explains the purpose of these writings:

That is, what has been published about Indians and missionaries too often has been written with an implicit and sometimes explicit bias toward Euro-american culture. The result has been a predisposition to favor and even heroize the missionaries at the cost of depreciating Indian peoples, sometimes as savage and sometimes as innocent but childish, yet always as culturally (and, hence, spiritually) less than the Euro-Christian norm.49

This seems quite apparent when discussing historic individuals such as the French Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette. In fact, it appears that this way of thinking may be largely responsible for why Marquette has reached such a mythic status in the area. Tinker continues with the idea that “the motivation and the theoretical basis for the missionary endeavor, apparent both from the actual practice of the missionaries and from their

48 Michigan, Wisconsin Tourbook, 28.
49 Tinker, 4.
writings, will demonstrate that they not only preached a new gospel of salvation, but also just as energetically imposed a new cultural model for existence on Indian people.”  

Tinker goes on to state that these missionaries, even the most revered today (to near sainthood), had a large part in the genocide of Native American peoples. These missionaries often had a profoundly negative impact upon the cultures they encountered. But sometimes they were unknowing participants in the destruction of Native American cultures, through such things as disease. Other times the destructive situations existed before their arrival, and some even ventured to alleviate part of the destruction caused by the colonial encounter. The example of Marquette aiding the Native Americans in the Michilimackinac area, due to war with the Iroquois and Sioux, is a good example of an attempt to help solve the problem. One should realize that the Iroquois only invaded the lands of these people in the first place because they acquired guns from the Europeans and were devastated by contact with Europeans, which led to mourning wars. This demonstrates how colonial contact was devastating but should not always be attributed to missionaries in general because some reacted against what other colonizers had already done. It seems apparent that Tinker does not wish to demonize all missionaries, but to expose another side of the story that is rarely told. Tinker expresses the belief that the interaction between missionaries and Native Americans is a form of cultural genocide. However, he doesn’t believe that it is always consciously done, but can be equally devastating nonetheless. Tinker defines “cultural genocide” as “the effective destruction of a people by systematically or systemically (intentionally or unintentionally in order to achieve other goals) destroying, eroding, or undermining the integrity of the culture and system of values that defines a people and gives them life.” Tinker also makes it clear that economics play a key role in this form of cultural genocide.

There are typically two ways in which Native Americans are viewed: as savage, violent and uncivilized, or as noble, proud, and peaceful. The former view often displays the Native Americans as wholly other, the latter as the proximate and understandable other. However, this dichotomy fails to recognize the Native Americans for who they

---

50 Tinker, 4.
51 Tinker, 4.
52 Tinker, 5.
53 Tinker, 6.
are. As Todorov explains, “it is because both rest on a common basis, which is the failure to recognize the Indians, and the refusal to admit them as a subject having the same rights as oneself, but different.”

This lack of recognition presents a situation in which power must be exerted to control what one does not understand. The colonizers believed they understood the Native Americans but in actuality, “what is grasped is the form but not the meaning.”

What further complicates the issue, and makes it difficult to understand the Native American viewpoint, is that we do not have any writings from this time period by Native Americans. Todorov explains that “the case of the texts expressing the Indians’ point of view is especially problematic: as it happens, given the absence of native writings, they are all subsequent to the conquest and therefore influenced by the conquerors.”

Therefore, all of our knowledge concerning the Native Americans of the Michilimackinac region during this time period comes from the French. The writings we have are an expression of the power relations present in the colonial context. Under this umbrella it is important to know that it is not the historical accuracy of the texts we are concerned with, but the telling of them themselves and how they are received by the readers. The stories told in these texts, whether they are factually true or not, reveal a considerable amount about how the colonizers viewed the world around them. Todorov goes on to state:

That is, an event may not have occurred, despite the allegations of one of the chroniclers. But the fact that the latter could have stated such an event, that he could have counted on its acceptance by the contemporary public, is at least as revealing as the simple occurrence of an event which proceeds, after all, from chance … and when an author is mistaken, or lying, his text is no less significant than when he is speaking the truth; the important thing is that the text be ‘receivable’ by contemporaries, or that it has been regarded as such by its producer. From this point of view, the notion of ‘false’ is irrelevant here.

---

55 Todorov, 230.
56 Todorov, 53-54.
57 Todorov, 54.
Todorov fluently expresses this understanding of the retelling of a significant event. What is important is the transmission and reception of the story as well as the meaning it holds for the audience.

Todorov is arguing against hybridity forming in these regions, viewing their interactions in the New World as a loss on the side of the colonizing Europeans. Due to a lack of understanding the colonizers exert their power over the people they have come into contact with. “By winning on one side, the Europeans lost on the other; by imposing their superiority upon the entire country, they destroyed their own capacity to integrate themselves into the world.”

By deemphasizing any attempt at understanding, and replacing it with domination instead, the colonizers created something that can be controlled, maintained, and understood for them. Todorov makes it clear that “a civilization may have features we can say are superior or inferior; but this does not justify their being imposed on others. Even more, to impose one’s will on others implies that one does not concede to that other the same humanity one grants to oneself, an implication which precisely characterizes a lower civilization.” In this way the Native Americans are viewed as less than human to justify the treatment imposed upon them.

Todorov’s emphasis on the importance of power relationships in story transmission requires us to delve deeper into the roles stories play in communities. By analyzing how people create their history it is possible to comprehend the complex connections people have with the past. This is an idea explored by Eric Hobsbawm.

Hobsbawm is a British scholar who has applied the notion of “inventing traditions” in the context of ritual to the last two hundred years. He is referring mainly to developments of nationalism in the western world, particularly Europe, with new traditions adapting old materials to the extent of inventing historical continuity. I intend to use the concept of “invented tradition” in a broader context but still in a very similar way, particularly that, “the study of invented traditions cannot be separated from the wider study of the history of society … it throws a considerable light on the human relation to the past, and therefore on the historian’s own subject and craft. For all

---

58 Todorov, 97.
59 Todorov, 179.
invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion.”

This understanding of the connection between history and the identity and orientation of a society are essential to comprehending the current conceptions of Cross Village.

It is a popular misconception that in order for something to be a tradition, for instance a myth or a ritual, it has to be something old. Perhaps this could be a time period that still remains within our historical memory or perhaps even beyond. Yet, according to Hobsbawm this is not always the case. Hobsbawm goes on to define traditions and distinguish between older and more recent types of tradition. “‘Traditions’ which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented …The term ‘invented tradition’ is used in a broad, but not imprecise sense. It includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity.” It is these statements that lead me to consider an alternative view of traditions, and myths more importantly.

Stories that people tell themselves today to explain or orient themselves and their location in a certain place based on historical figures, events, etc., is a way of inventing or constructing an identity in the modern world. These people are not reaching deep into the past, “‘in those days,’ *in illo tempore, ab origine.*” Rather, these individuals and communities are looking toward a more recent past, one that can be identified in history instead of an ahistorical past or, “sacred time,” “once upon a time” (*in illo tempore, ab origine*). However, these stories are mythic because although they take place in history they also take on aspects of ahistorical narratives. So in essence these myths are stuck somewhere in between. They contain aspects of both historical and ahistorical time.

I use the term “myth” to mean a true story that may or may not have happened. It is true in that it has valuable information about a certain group of people; for instance, who they are and where they came from. Most importantly, a myth is a true story.

---

61 Hobsbawm, 12.
62 Hobsbawm, 1.
because it is true to the people who tell it to one another. A myth transmits some kind of meaning. It is through the retelling of myths that a connection to the past is maintained. In addition, symbols play a role in myth telling as well. “ ‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” Here is evidence that Hobsbawm is primarily concerned with ritual practice and behavior that provides a connection with the past through repetition. Through invoking the symbol of the cross or the republishing of old photographs certain values can be conveyed to the listener or reader of the myth.

In the case of Cross Village the old ways are not alive, nor do we even know what the old ways were, so the ‘invention of tradition’ is quite applicable to Cross Village. In other cases there is a plurality of old ways that might not mesh well together, so a single new construction of an old tradition is invented to form a continuity with the past and a way to construct a common history for all those in the community. “On the other hand the strength and adaptability of genuine traditions is not to be confused with the ‘invention of tradition’. Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented.” I am using “old ways” in the sense that in this area an ancient history or tradition has been erased.

65 Mircea Eliade discussed this concept of myth in numerous works, including The Myth of the Eternal Return and The Sacred and the Profane. In addition, many other scholars have followed in the footsteps of Eliade in their understanding of myth such as Charles Long: “I am using the term ‘myth’ in the sense taught by Mircea Eliade – it is a true story.” (Charles H. Long, Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, Publishers, 1995), 114), Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty: “It might be useful to list some things that I think myths are not: myths are not lies, or false statements to be contrasted with truth or reality.” (Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, Other Peoples’ Myths: The Cave of Echoes (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 25), Tzvetan Todorov: “I have chosen to narrate a history. Closer to myth than to argument, it is nonetheless to be distinguished from myth on two levels: first because it is a true story (which myth could, but need not, be), and second because my main interest is less a historian’s than a moralist’s; the present is more important to me than the past.” (Tzvetan Todorov, The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), 4), Richard Hughes: “A myth is not a story that is patently untrue. Rather, a myth is a story that speaks of meaning and purpose, and for that reason it speaks truth to those who take it seriously.” (Richard T. Hughes, Myths America Lives By (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 2), and Sam D. Gill, “North American Religions: Mythic Themes” in The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. 1., ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987).

66 Hobsbawm, 1.

67 Hobsbawm, 8.
One can see forms of identity construction and orientation played out in stories current residents of Cross Village tell themselves today about their history. Stories take on various forms and are used to convey different messages and meanings. Therefore, stories have been categorized over time to differentiate what kind of message is being sent. Whether a myth, a legend, or a folktale, a story is used to convey a message to a people. This message in turn conveys a certain amount of meaning for a people concerning who they are.

This takes on greater significance in the present as scholars have taken data, such as the previously mentioned stories, and developed methods and theories to explain their significance. This led to more recent methods and theories for how to study local and regional history and the many elements such as identity construction and the importance of place, which play a role in the telling of these histories. Scholars such as White, Mauzé, Connerton, and Basso use these histories to discuss the importance of place, colonial contact, memory construction, and a variety of other issues. It is these authors that will help put the previous material into perspective to further develop a theory of how the telling of the history, primarily the religious history, plays a role in the construction of identity and orientation for current residents of the region. In addition, these theorists will help identify how key elements such as place, symbols, materiality, events, and historical figures have played a role in these stories and how they are constructed and used today.

A resurgence of interest in the history of the region in the 1960s is reflective of a broader American interest in ethnic roots and local histories during this period. Scholars such as Stebbins and Steck examined conflicting seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, seeking to determine the facts of the region’s early history. Other authors, such as Mary Belle Shurtleff, looked toward the nineteenth century writers with nostalgia, believing that something had been lost and that a re-romanticizing of the landscape, people, and events was needed. Overall, these writers wished to reconstruct the factual and definitive history of the region, the people, and the events that transpired there. The belief was that there was some pure history to be discovered. Nuances of cultural distinction and perception were absent.
Beginning in the 1980s, scholars developed more critical views of the area and its histories. This was done primarily through mapping and critically examining place-naming. Authors such as Helen Hornbeck Tanner and Walter Romig took a new approach to studying the region. Previous writers had been concerned with mapping and geography, but only to the extent that it supplemented their primary work. For these authors the maps and geographical constructions were the story. However, much of their research relied upon previous writers, such as Shurtleff, as they endeavored to determine the history of the region and the progressions of place-naming.

People often use nineteenth century romanticized notions of landscape when describing the area around and including Cross Village. This is often expressed in journal entries, poems, and songs. The landscape itself becomes anthropomorphized and indistinguishable from the identity of the individual describing this connection. Much of the history of Cross Village draws on nineteenth century writings by people such as Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Schoolcraft is often described as an explorer. He began his work with the government as a mineralogist but was later appointed as the Indian agent of Northern Michigan, a post which he held from 1822-1841. It is interesting to note that Schoolcraft had mixed feelings about the Indian agent position and only accepted it as a temporary position.68 During this time he visited numerous tribes, facilitated treaties, and provided basic needs to Indians. Through these interactions he was able to collect data on all aspects of Indian life by talking to Indians, traders, soldiers, other agents, and surveyors.69 He was very interested in learning the languages of the people he interacted with and he wrote extensively and shared his knowledge with the public.70

With Schoolcraft and others came the notion of salvage anthropology in which Euro-Americans felt the need to preserve as much of the stories, language, and culture of the Indians as they could before it disappeared, as they perceived it eventually would. The perception of Cross Village residents today is much in this same vein. Writers concerning Cross Village history in the last few decades have lamented at this apparent loss of culture and tradition that helped shape the region. There is a collective nostalgia

69 Schoolcraft, xiii.
70 Schoolcraft, xiv.
for festivals, modes of dress, crafts, and stories. The Native American has been replaced by symbolic representations in gift shop items harkening to a stereotype of what the Native people of the region once were or a lumping together with other tribes and perceptions of Native Americans as a whole. Stories about them are generally brief and speculative, emphasized by common phrases such as, “this could have been how or where it happened but we’re not sure.” The information one gathers from residents appears to be incomplete and filled with secondary rumors or hearsay passed around over and over until the stories become true and reliable despite a lack of information or sources. These are the brief watered down stories told to tourists and other visitors. There is a lack of substance overlooked by most and most do not have the desire to pursue more detailed information on the subject matter of these stories.

Shurtleff’s book, *Old Arbre Croche*, uses these types of stories, nostalgia, and romanticism in an attempt to tell the complete history of Cross Village. However, her book demonstrates an interesting retelling of history through selective memory. Paul Connerton thoroughly examines the role memory plays for communal and individual reconstructions of history. His examination of memory directly relates to Shurtleff and current residents of Cross Village in the way they reconstruct their history. He focuses on how memory is used to make connections. For instance, he describes how a contemporary memory can be seen as a continuation of the past. “For an individual’s consciousness of time is to a large degree an awareness of society’s continuity, or more exactly of the image of that continuity which the society creates.”  

Furthermore, he states, “we need to distinguish social memory from a more specific practice that is best termed the activity of historical reconstruction. Knowledge of all human activities in the past is possible only through a knowledge of their traces.” So even though the contemporary memory of the past is a continuation of the past itself it is still a social construct. This implies that those remembering the past have focused on certain aspects of it they find most relevant to their lives today. Connerton expresses this by stating, “concerning social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past commonly

---

72 Connerton, 13.
legitimate a present social order.”\textsuperscript{73} This “social order” can be seen as the communal identity. The past reflects current notions of the self. However, Connerton further problematizes the notion of the self by claiming another important connection; that the self cannot be wholly separated from the society in which it dwells. “This leaves little if any space for the presentation of the self in everyday life because, to such a large degree, individuals remember in common.”\textsuperscript{74} A work such as Shurtleff’s can be seen in a contemporary social context as a means of identifying the current social world with that of the past and of identifying the self with the society.

History, memory, and stories all play a key role in the construction and maintenance of a sacred space and an identity. David Glassberg expresses this idea in \textit{Sense of History} when he states that “over time, these places become repositories of religious experience, gathering and condensing tradition, practice, and memory.”\textsuperscript{75} He continues by stating that “the histories we tell not only communicate our political ideologies and group identities, but also orient us in the environment. Public histories provide meaning to places.”\textsuperscript{76} Glassberg approaches memory in connection to history, identity, and place from a psychological perspective, but his analysis can easily be interpreted and utilized when discussing conceptions of sacred space. For instance, Glassberg’s thoughts are echoed by Louis Nelson in the introduction to \textit{American Sanctuary}: “The construction of the sacred in each case necessitates a response to memory as individuals or communities engage in the self-writing of identity.”\textsuperscript{77} Therefore, sacred space is a connection to heritage and history. There is a sense of ownership in a sacred space, much like a sense of history. A sacred space is a place to tell stories and gather together to remind ourselves of the larger world. Place, then, becomes the central focus of this identity. “Places loom large not only in our personal recollections but also in the collective memory of our communities. Through conversations among family and friends about past local characters, about the weather,
about work, we transform ordinary environments into ‘storied places.’”78 The stories cannot be separated from the places. They become a marker for individual and communal identity and as a means of orienting toward the larger world. The stories tell a history, but a history grounded in the specific context of a place from which it cannot be separated. This point is reiterated by Leslie M. Silko in Keith Basso’s book *Senses of Place*:

The stories cannot be separated from geographical locations, from actual physical locations within the land…. And the stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose the stories because there are so many imposing geological elements . . . you cannot live in that land without asking or looking at or noticing a boulder or rock. And there’s always a story.79

Perceptions of landscape are constructed and maintained through the retelling of particular stories that occurred in particular places. The land is a reminder of a story that conveys an important aspect of a people. Robert Orsi, in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, examines how stories are retold as a means of maintaining a communal identity:

Personal integrity and stability depend on the ability to remember. Memory locates the individual in a community: individuals share memories with various groups—family, neighborhood, city, and so on—and this communion of memory is the foundation of their membership in these groups. Memory is also that which binds men and women together in their most intimate relations with their families. Older members of the family share their recollections, which are often part of a corporate memory they too had once been taught, with their younger kin, who in this way are invited and integrated into the generations. Memory finally helps shape personal identity: men and women discover who they are in their memories.80

One problem in Cross Village is that this stability is in jeopardy. I learned from Walt, the owner of Webbers Gift Shop, that much of the oral history of the village has been lost. The ones who do know the stories are quite elderly, have Alzheimer’s, or are unwilling to talk. It appears as if the transmission of the

78 Glassberg, 19.
community’s stories, and therefore history, is not being properly passed down in order to maintain the identity associated with them. What is preserved is often an overly filtered and generalized version of a story which presents problems of accuracy.

Memory also presents the problem of authenticity. “Through memory we try to recapture an authentic past. However, since the past is changed through remembering, we cannot truly remember it. Instead we look to spaces, gestures, images, and objects to embody memory.”81 The problems associated with authenticity become apparent when looking specifically at the cross, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Individuals remember, but from within a defined social construct. Memory, therefore, requires groups. In Collective Memory Maurice Halbwachs continued the Durkheimian tradition of sociology. He was concerned with the sociology of knowledge and the roots of collective memory, believing that collective memory and notions of time are socially constructed. Halbwachs “believed that the past was mainly known through symbol and ritualism as well as historiography and biography.”82 He differentiated between historical and autobiographical memory. Historical memory uses written records and is kept alive through public commemorations and social institutions. Autobiographical memory is personal experience of events reinforced through social interactions with those with similar memories or who shared in the event. Autobiographical memories fade with time and rely on other people.

For Halbwachs collective memory fills the void between what Durkheim called “collective effervescence” and ordinary life through ritual and ceremony when physical reminders are not present.83 Halbwachs took a selective approach to history and memory where “the past is a social construction mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present.”84 Therefore, memory depends on social environment and society provides a framework for memory. This can often mean that “the great majority of people more or

---

84 Halbwachs, 25.
less frequently are given to what one might call nostalgia for the past.”\textsuperscript{85} This “nostalgia for the past” is a key ingredient for my understanding of Cross Village history and identity.

A community’s memories concerning religion are not immune from these same rules. Halbwachs claimed that “although religious memory attempts to isolate itself from temporal society, it obeys the same laws as every collective memory: it does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present.”\textsuperscript{86} Religious memory draws from particular elements of the past, much like any other memory, and uses the tools of the present to imbue the memory with meaning.

The history of memory is constructed with imaginary representations, historical realities, and symbolic sites. It is from this perspective that Cross Village’s social and cultural identity has been created. But memory is different from history. History looks to empirical evidence where memory does not. In the book \textit{Realms of Memory} Pierre Nora explores a history of France through the lens of memory. Nora seeks “to locate the ‘memory places’ of French national identity as they have been constructed since the middle ages.”\textsuperscript{87} For Nora the French past is a compilation of memory places constructed over time that demonstrate how “imaginary communities” create a national memory.\textsuperscript{88} Nora borrows the idea of memory place to describe the nation from Frances Yates and Maurice Halbwachs. Nora reexamines Halbwachs’s concept of collective memory. For Nora and Halbwachs remembering is always social so that “places of memory are therefore determined by the mix of individuals that constitute the social group to which they relate.”\textsuperscript{89} Nora has a broad conception of memory, which includes geographical place, historical figures, monuments and buildings, literary and artistic objects, and emblems, commemorations, and symbols; all of which he uses to describe France. These

\textsuperscript{85} Halbwachs, 49.
\textsuperscript{86} Halbwachs, 119.
\textsuperscript{88} Nora, ix.
\textsuperscript{89} Nora, xi.
are the *loci memoriae*. Memory places are symbolic but contain meaning that creates collective identities.

Nora’s work is a historiographical approach. He believes that “every important advance in the field of history has been associated with a major historical upheaval, as a result of which historians have been led to explore new sources, methods, and interests.” Nora tells us that “memory is constantly on our lips because it no longer exists.” There are no longer societies and ideologies based on memory because they have been taken over by a more modern idea of history. Historiography creates and promotes doubt. “When we question a tradition, however venerable, we separate ourselves from it to a degree.” Nora believes that we have to reexamine historical and historiographical research. Historiography involves looking at traditional elements of the past in a new light.

One of Nora’s main goals is to identify the changes that French memory has undergone over time. This makes Nora’s book an innovative and new approach to writing national history. But Nora’s work is a history of the present as well as a history of the past. Nora contends that memory acts as a trace of history because memory is not as much a lived part of everyday experience in the contemporary world. People are not connected to history through memory like other societies where memory is acted out through traditions and rituals in which the present and the past exist simultaneously. According to Nora real memory no longer exists, and what we have today, “realms of memory,” takes the place of what has disappeared. Our understanding of the past is just how we represent it in the present. Nora conceives of time differently to understand this. He provides new interpretations of memory that give new meanings to history. History tries to be unifying, but what Nora tries to get us to understand is that “what remains of the idea of nationhood is engendered by a nostalgic reflection, articulated through the disjunctive remembrance of things past.” In order to understand contemporary memory one must understand what history has been lost. We must try to understand “culture in

---

90 Nora, xxii.
91 Nora, 1.
92 Nora, 2.
93 Nora, 4.
94 Nora, xii.
95 Nora, xiii.
places, objects, and images that are marked by vestiges of the past, and remembered in the vicissitudes of contemporary consciousness.”

What Nora has done is to create an idea of France that is a construction of memory. Nora believes that French cultural identity can be rediscovered or rewritten with a new understanding of the history of memory. Nora’s is a contemporary and symbolic history rather than a traditional history; a national history of France that could be put into other national contexts and even apply to local memory constructions in places like Cross Village. Nora looks at how a French identity endures through changes and divisions that often cause conflict and tension, such as views on religion, space, time, and politics. He studies the historical construction and development of symbols to understand France.

One of the important goals of the Nora’s book, and for my project as well, is to understand the term lieu de mémoire. Nora takes a theoretical approach to places of memory. For instance, he states that “it was no longer enough simply to select objects; instead those objects would have to be constructed: in each case one would have to look beyond the historical reality to discover the symbolic reality and recover the memory that is sustained.” Additionally, “lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.” Lieux de mémoire involve nostalgia and commemoration. They are embodied forms of selective memory, remnants of the past in a changing society with small elements of the sacred infused into a secular society. Without lieux de mémoire history would do away with these memories. Lieux de mémoire exist because these memories are no longer living presences in our lives. Lieux de mémoire protect our identities by taking particular memories out of history, transforming them, and then placing them back in to history. Lieux de mémoire are in a liminal state between living and dead. “They are lieux—places, sites, causes—

96 Nora, xiii.
97 Nora, xiii-xiv.
98 Nora, 23.
99 Nora, xvii.
100 Nora, xvii.
101 Nora, 7.
in three senses: material, symbolic, and functional.”¹⁰² These all coexist as one whole. The intent to remember is what differentiates lieux de mémoire from lieux d’histoire.¹⁰³

Memory is being absorbed by history.¹⁰⁴ “Memory dictates and history writes. Both history books and historical events deserve special attention: both are implements that memory uses to inscribe itself on the historical record. Hence they stake out the boundaries of our domain.”¹⁰⁵ “Memory fastens upon sites, whereas history fastens upon events.”¹⁰⁶ Monuments can be divorced from their location and still hold meaning; for example, the Christian cross. “The transition from memory to history requires every social group to redefine its identity by dredging up its past.”¹⁰⁷ The obligation to remember makes everyone into a historian.¹⁰⁸ This can be seen in the work of Mary Belle Shurtleff. There has been a transition of memory from history to psychology, from concrete to subjective, and from repetition to remembrance.¹⁰⁹ Memory used to be social and tied to place. Memory is now important for individual identity. Memory has become individualized. Memory is now private and so relates to the past differently.¹¹⁰

According to Nora there are now three kinds of memory; archival, individual, and alienated. The idea of alienated memory is that when we think of ourselves in relationship to the past it is no longer continuous. We are disconnected or cut off from our “origins.”¹¹¹ This is a rather new idea of representing the past instead of resurrecting it.¹¹² In this sense we no longer have possession of the past. We pick and choose from selected fragments of the past and try to piece them together to reconstruct how we experience, or would like to experience, history. It is a means of constructing our identity from what we no longer are.¹¹³ Individual memory is that idea that history has become more personal by “taking something lifeless and meaningless and investing it with life

¹⁰² Nora, 14.
¹⁰³ Nora, 15.
¹⁰⁴ Nora, 8.
¹⁰⁵ Nora, 17.
¹⁰⁶ Nora, 18.
¹⁰⁷ Nora, 10.
¹⁰⁸ Nora, 10.
¹⁰⁹ Nora, 11.
¹¹⁰ Nora, 11.
¹¹¹ Nora, 12.
¹¹² Nora, 12.
¹¹³ Nora, 13.
Archival memory is a desire to preserve memories because of the fear that something will be lost and because of an anxiety about the future. So memory is manifested in tangible fragments. We keep everything out of the fear that we don’t know what we will need to recall in the future. This is the purpose of archives.

Nora also defines and differentiates between memory and history. Memory and history are quite different. “Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened.” History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.” “History is a representation of the past,” while memory ties us to the present. Memory resides in groups. It is both communal and individual simultaneously. History is critical and universal, critical of memory in particular. “Memory situates remembrance in a sacred context.” Memory “is to be understood in its ‘sacred context’ as the variety of forms through which cultural communities imagine themselves in diverse representational modes.” Memory creates social identity and binds communities, but looking to the past is usually an effect of some loss to living traditions. “Memory is rooted in the concrete: in space, gesture, image, and object.” “History dwells exclusively on temporal continuities, on changes in things and in the relations among things.” “Memory is an absolute, while history is always relative.”

A number of scholars have drawn on the work of theorists such as Halbwachs and Nora and applied it to real places in the American landscape. In Monuments and Memory Martha Norkunas writes about monuments, their connections to gender, ethnicity, power, space, and narrative, and their relationship to memory and history. The book investigates
issues of memory and history through local and vernacular monuments. She looks at the community of Lowell, Massachusetts as a case study. Lowell is used to address the problem that few records exist of local monuments in many communities across America. The book is a personal story. She believes that personal memory sets the context for understanding the monuments. Her story is part of the memory and history of the monuments through her connection to place. She is concerned with connections between the personal and the public by examining the role of monuments in American culture.

Norkunas is concerned with multiple collective memories and she explores the idea that the meaning of America is still being considered in specific places. She also recognizes the relationship between monuments and power in a similar way that I interpret the Cross Village community’s understanding of the cross. There is a symbolic significance of location and space as well as a relationship between history, memory, and monuments. Monuments are an expression of memory. As places change so does our contemporary understanding of the past. She looks at the insider versus outsider dilemma by looking at who has the authority to claim knowledge.

In another work, *The Politics of Public Memory*, Norkunas looks at tourism and museums as a construction of a past, culture, and identity that is shaped by the present but tells a particular version of history. She examines the reconstruction of the past and the reinterpretation of the present found in museums, monuments and public culture. She uses Monterey, California as a case study. She examines “tourism as a journey from the profane into the sacred”\(^1\) and that in Monterey “tourism had absorbed some of the social functions of religion as it became an essentially religious quest for authenticity.”\(^2\) She sees herself as an “ethnographer of modernity,” studying the “public texts of tourism and history.”\(^3\)

Norkunas desires to make the ‘other’ familiar and recognizes that understanding is what is important. Her descriptive approach to understanding power relationships, public history, and ethnicity can be beneficial to many studies of American culture. Her views on tourism’s effects on native identity are perhaps the most compelling. For

---

instance, at one point she states that “such ‘bastardized’ versions of the natives’ cultural heritage may become for the native, ‘authentic’ markers of a re-created identity. The natives’ own identity changed to suit what are believed to be the tourists’ tastes, becomes so known and so ingrained, and perhaps encouraged by developers and the state, that it eventually becomes accepted as true by the natives themselves.”¹²⁷ I believe these sentiments resonate in places like Cross Village today.

In a paper titled “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory” Barry Schwartz looks to and analyzes the contributions of Halbwachs, Lévi-Strauss, and Eliade to try to understand how the past helps us to solve the present. He examines the importance of origins for Eliade and the importance of categorization for Lévi-Strauss. For Schwartz “our memory of the past is preserved mainly by means of chronicling, the direct recording of events and their sequence.”¹²⁸ However, not all events hold the same level of importance. “Commemoration lifts from an ordinary historical sequence those extraordinary events which embody our deepest and most fundamental values. Commemoration, the main concern of this paper, is in this sense a register of sacred history.”¹²⁹ Iconography is one way to commemorate. Schwartz defines an icon as “a pictorial representation of a sacred figure to whom veneration is offered.”¹³⁰ His main example/case study of the paper is the United States Capitol Building as a commemorative archive. He is mainly concerned with the icons stored within. The commemorative nature of the Capitol’s iconography is meant to be interpreted as expressing virtues of the nation’s past. They tell a social history and relate to national origins. These icons are seen as rediscovering, recovering, and remembering history.

Schwartz looks at how the significance of historical events changes with time and society. He states that the “recollection of the past is an active, constructive process, not a simple matter of retrieving information. To remember is to place a part of the past in

¹²⁹ Schwartz, 377.
¹³⁰ Schwartz, 377.
the service of conceptions and needs of the present."131 But changes in knowledge of the past also affect society’s structure.

131 Schwartz, 374.
CHAPTER 3

These trees and plants – birch, hemlock and pine,
Dogwood and bittersweet –
Are of the soil that is my soil.
This breeze is our breath,
This lake and fog and sun
Our common nourishment.
Let those who will, burn the paved hills
And fragment the sky on iron wings!
They describe circles, large or small –
And will make landing here –
Where we cultivate in peace
And wait in silent praise.

Ivan Swift, *Landing*

The cross is a marker and an object through which an identity is constructed and oriented. It is the symbol of the town itself. The community derives its name from it and uses its image in nearly every published work on the village as well as postcards and t-shirts. It demonstrates how a Catholic symbol that once had a more specific sacred meaning can be appropriated as a sacred image for the larger community. It was placed there in the late 1600s by French Jesuit missionaries to be a visible sign to passing travelers that this was sacred ground. This is not the original cross, but still expresses the same meaning through the material symbol. The current cross is a thirty foot replica of the one believed to have been planted by Jesuit missionaries over three hundred years ago.

The problem of authenticity arises when residents try to tell others about its meaning and history. The cross is still commonly referred to as “Marquette’s Cross,” named after Father Jacques Marquette, a French Jesuit missionary in the region during the 1670s. Many believe that he was the one who planted the original cross. However, it appears doubtful that Marquette was ever in the area or was even alive when it was believed that the cross was first planted. Yet, most residents do not see a disparity between the factual history and the remembered history. The cross is a reminder of the

---

133 I have covered this topic extensively in a previous work.
history of the village but the details surrounding it are of little importance and do not appear to have much impact on its intended meaning. As Colleen McDannell explains in *Material Christianity*; “the site or object becomes authentic in the desire of the spectator, not in the precision of the details.”\(^{134}\) It is through the retelling of the stories as the residents have them that creates their authentic past along with the objects associated with them. Whether the stories are factually true or not appears to be of little importance.

The cross itself is set apart by being located in an open grass lot overlooking the bluff above Lake Michigan. There is no sign, pathway, gate, or arch; just a simple garden, some stones, and a small unreadable plaque on the cross. The cross serves as its own marker, needing no other signs to hint at its significance. The open green space surrounding it and its size are what set it off as distinct, special, and sacred. Before the erection of the cross there existed a crooked tree that acted as a marker and signifier for the area. The cross became a replacement for that tree as the main symbol for the area and a newly established power.

Oddly enough, the cross is not in the center of town or by the Catholic Church, even though it is clearly important and the central image of the town. It is actually across the street from the Presbyterian Church, which wasn’t erected until 1925. Although it is the central image it is physically located on the periphery.

It has still played a prominent role in events, such as the 300\(^{th}\) anniversary of the village and the Great Fire. Although the 300\(^{th}\) anniversary was supervised and planned by the Catholic clergy it was open and meant to be for the whole community, showing how previously Catholic notions of the sacred have been diffused and reaffirmed throughout the rest of the community through ceremonies, parades, meals, etc.

Right now the land where the cross is located is privately owned. The concern is that they may sell it because the land is prime real estate. It is right on the bluff overlooking the lake.\(^{135}\) The proposal is for the township to purchase the land so that it can be maintained and protected. This would raise taxes slightly. This current debate demonstrates the blurred distinctions concerning the sacred and the profane.

\(^{134}\) McDannell, 161.

\(^{135}\) See Fig. 8 in Appendix.
What makes a place sacred? From what I have presented earlier it would appear that two elements are essential to make a place sacred; community and time. However, it is more complex and there are other issues to consider. For Eliade sacred spaces are different, structured, and consistent. They reveal aspects of an absolute reality and provide a fixed point or center from which to orient oneself to the rest of the world. Profane spaces, on the other hand, are homogeneous, neutral, and indifferent. However, Eliade also recognizes the existence of “privileged places, quantitatively different from all others,” which are profane yet retain a “unique quality” to them that has special meaning separate from ordinary life.

Eliade recognizes the sacred as containing three important elements: a center from which to orient toward the rest of the world, a means of ordering, as well as being a space set apart with distinct boundaries. For Eliade “the center renders orientation possible.” Without a fixed focal point a community cannot maintain a strong sense of identity and therefore orient themselves toward the rest of the world. The cross in Cross Village becomes that center.

After a center is established the surrounding area can be constructed to fit and fulfill a preconceived notion of what is ordered. This is, according to Eliade, a sacred act. “The cosmicization of unknown territories is always a consecration; to organize a space is to repeat the paradigmatic work of the gods.” According to Eliade this must be done. Otherwise man lives in a world that is not understandable. “Life is not possible without an opening toward the transcendent; in other words, human beings cannot live in chaos.” In this sense man is recreating a world that already exists in some divine reality. “The experience of sacred space makes possible the ‘founding of the world’: where the sacred manifests itself in space, the real unveils itself, the world comes into existence.”

---

140 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 63.
141 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 32.
142 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 34.
143 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 63.
when physically placed upon the landscape itself. In this understanding “the world becomes apprehensible as world, as cosmos, in the measure in which it reveals itself as a sacred world.”144 Sacred spaces are meant to convey a sense of the majestic and reflect the divine. They are meant to be inspiring and bring you closer to the sacred and invoke an emotional response.

Finally, this newly constructed cosmos needs to be clearly distinguished from the chaos or wilderness. In order to do this a boundary must be established. “The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds—and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible.”145 This boundary is maintained through the use of a “threshold,” a defined point in which sacred and profane meet, a gate in which one passes from one state to the other. Nelson emphasizes the same point by stating that, “an essential component of sacred space is its boundary that defines and contains. A place cannot be sacred unless it is distinguished from more common or profane space beyond.”146 Nelson latches onto Eliade’s clear distinction between sacred and profane. “The being or presence of the divine ‘irrupts’ life itself in a palpable reality, creating sacred space with essential character that is radically different and easily distinguishable from the profane or the ordinary.”147

There are a few examples in Cross Village that demonstrate this clear distinction between sacred and profane in the form of a boundary or threshold. The first is the wall that is being reconstructed on the edge of the parish property; although only about three feet tall, it clearly marks the boundary between church and village. The wall is being reconstructed by Odawa Indian masonry workers at a cost of $30,000. Most donations have come from non-Catholics. So although the physical wall marks a boundary between sacred and profane, the funding for it blurs that distinction.

Another set of examples are the three cemeteries in town. Two are next to each other, one a Catholic cemetery, the other Protestant. Each has a sign designating it as a cemetery, a fence surrounding it, and a clear entry point. In addition, the Catholic

144 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 64.
145 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 25.
146 Nelson, 7.
147 Nelson, 3.
cemetery contains a significant number of white crosses, while the protestant cemetery contains mostly headstones. This doesn’t establish one as more sacred than the other but clearly marks the differences between them. The third cemetery contains Weikamp’s crypt, which I will address in further detail later. This cemetery has no sign, but does have a fence surrounding it and a clear entrance. This cemetery perhaps most clearly illustrates a boundary because the gate and crypt are kept locked. Also, it contains rows of white crosses, a large cross in the middle of the cemetery, and the crypt in the center. All of this is surrounded by a considerable amount of green space. To any outside observer this site is certainly considered set apart as sacred.

The final example is the church itself. The Holy Cross church has had many names, including the names of saints. It has been known as Holy Cross since 1895. It has a central entryway with steps leading up to it, meant to be a symbolic as well as actual ascent to the threshold between sacred and profane. Outside are clear markers of a sacred space. It has a typical and plain style to it that is typical of missionary churches in the area, it has a steeple with a cross on top, as well as a cross near the entryway, and a very distinctive stained glass window above the doorway. The stained glass window has an image of the original wigwam church next to an image of Holy Cross Church. In the middle is a large white cross, meant to represent the actual cross further down the road. This window presents a continuity between old and new, Native and Euro-American, with the prominence and centrality of the cross always present. From these examples one can gather that the sacred and profane are wholly different and one cannot cross over into the other or blend in any way. Yet, does this hold up? Is this always the case?

Colleen McDannell, in *Material Christianity*, challenges Eliade’s distinction between sacred and profane. After a while the meaning becomes fuzzy and starts to disappear; it is no longer easy to distinguish. McDannell does define and distinguish between sacred and profane. “The sacred consists of an ideal and transcendental world that is set apart from ordinary life.”

However, according to McDannell the two terms are not mutually exclusive. There is often a grey area. “The categories of sacred and profane are the constructions of scholars

---

148 See Fig. 9 in Appendix.
149 McDannell, 5.
150 McDannell, 5.
and not always a part of the awareness of those involved in practicing religion."\textsuperscript{151} So it becomes the lived reality and the actual practice of religion that blurs the line between the two.

The blurred distinction between sacred and profane is best demonstrated in the Parish Center and The Museum of L’Arbre Croche History. The Fr. Albert Langheim, OFM Parish Center is named for the last priest to serve the Cross Village community, known as Father Al.\textsuperscript{152} The museum is located in the basement and was started by Father Al, demonstrating the Catholic connection to the wider community and a re-appropriation of Catholic buildings. The Parish Center itself serves as a community gathering place, and although on Church grounds, serves more mundane functions.

The museum is meant to show a continuity between past and present and the strong sense of community involvement. As soon as you walk in you notice a portrait Our Lady of Victory.\textsuperscript{153} Although this space is meant to serve the whole community it is full of Catholic influences. These are not just relics or artifacts, like one might see in a typical museum. These objects still play a functional and dynamic role in the community. The names of the rooms, two Catholic, one Indian, and one French, displays not only the importance of naming but the hybrid nature of the community. Each room in the museum has a distinct theme to it. Three pictures of priests are displayed prominently, along with a considerable number of objects and literature related to them, showing the importance and influence of particular individual historic figures in shaping the identity and history of the area. This is meant to show that Cross Village has played a larger role in shaping regional history.

The flags on the wall displaying the various nationalities that have occupied the area symbolize the hybrid history of Cross Village, the missionary flag being prominently displayed separately. In the museum you can buy coffee mugs with a picture of the original wigwam mission church, a map of the area with Indian place names, and a book called \textit{Shepherd of the Wilderness} by Bernard J. Lambert, a biography on Bishop Baraga.

“Lived religion” involves interactions with material objects and places and the meanings attributed with those objects and places. Robert Orsi in \textit{The Madonna of 115th}
Street defines “lived religion” as “religious practice and imagination in ongoing, dynamic relation with the realities and structures of everyday life in particular times and places.” However, Orsi’s definition does not speak directly to material interactions. Nelson takes the next step by applying “lived religion” more specifically to human involvement with materiality:

In the context of architecture, the associations that allow architectural qualities to generate feelings of awe, mystery, humility, comfort, and other emotional responses are culturally constructed. Therefore, the sacred cannot be manifest in the material—the beautiful cannot be holy—without human agents who are burdened with culturally dependent beliefs and rituals that allow places and objects to be so interpreted.

In Cross Village meaning is applied to places and objects due to associations with stories, history, and various types of physical interactions with the places and materials. Without the community’s interpretations of these places and things there is no other inherent meaning. The residents create, reconstruct, and appropriate meanings based on personal experiences and what they have heard and read from others. This makes the religious life of the community in association with these things a “lived religion” because interactions and meanings are incredibly dynamic; changing not only with time and new information, but individual recollections and understanding that never seems to remain constant.

Places can become sacred if certain events happened there that were of a particular significance. Material objects can also have religious purposes but are not necessarily sacred in and of themselves. Buildings are not static places but come into being through cultural understandings. They are nothing until people interact with them to change their meaning and significance. Lindsay Jones advocates “that studies be constituted in terms of ceremonial (and sometimes unceremonious) situations that bring people and buildings into active interaction—dynamic occasions … describe[d] as ‘ritual-architectural events.’” These “ritual architectural events” are reliant upon human

154 Orsi, xiii.
155 Nelson, 4.
156 Nelson, 4.
interactions with places and objects as well as conveyed notions of history. One event in particular illustrates this point.

September 28, 1918 is known as the day of the Great Fire. It destroyed nearly the entire town, but one building in particular was spared, the Holy Cross Church, due to a miraculous event. This event demonstrates the importance and influences of interactions with material objects: “A thrilling feature was the scene at the old Catholic church where the white cross in the church yard defied the flames and loomed chaste and unharmed while all around it went down.”\(^{158}\) “When all were about to give up, one of my students (Frank Keller) said, ‘You always taught us to honor and pray to Our Lady of Victory; may I get her picture and hang it outside the school building?’ I (Sister Redempta) answered, ‘You’ll never be able to do that. The wind is too strong.’ He said, ‘I’ll use a spike.’ So I said he could try. As soon as the picture was nailed to the building, the wind changed direction quite suddenly. All these buildings were saved.”\(^{159}\) Due to perceived divine intervention the Church is not only sacred because of its institutional connections and ritual functions, but because this one act essentially re-sanctified the building and gave it new meaning.

Along with this event are recurring events that reaffirm social bonds and the relationship with sacred places. For instance, the Holy Cross annual picnic held each August is a homecoming celebration that brings together and renews social bonds in the community. The picnic has taken the place of former pow wow gatherings, but still maintains the tradition of community gathering and solidarity.\(^ {160}\) During these celebrations the pavilions on parish grounds serve rather profane functions. They also address the importance of naming and memorialization due to the fact that each is named after a former priest that served the community; a constant reminder of their sacred implications as well.

People can also act as markers of sacred space. Father John Bernard Weikamp was the parish priest in Cross Village from 1858 to 1889 and had a significant impact on the village. He established a convent for sisters and brothers, an orphanage, raised

---

\(^ {158}\) “The Petoskey Evening News,” September 28, 1918.
\(^ {159}\) Kathy Mendoza (information taken from a wall display panel in the Museum of L’Arbre Croche History, Cross Village, MI, July 2008).
\(^ {160}\) See figures 12 and 13 in Appendix.
livestock and crops, ran a sawmill, grist mill, blacksmith shop, and carpenter shop. This shows the connections between economic prosperity and religious prosperity. He is the only individual in Cross Village to have his own tomb or crypt.

Weikamp was an interesting character to say the least. According to legend, upon Weikamp’s arrival he dug himself a grave on church grounds and prayed and meditated in it for hours each day. Soon after his arrival he also constructed his own coffin, which he kept at the foot of his bed. He used a number of material objects in his religious life, many associated with death. Weikamp was apparently into mysticism, the occult, and obsessed with his own death.

Father Weikamp used to be buried on the original parish grounds but was moved in 1948 when the Church expanded. When the Catholic Church took over the land where Weikamp’s crypt now resides it was an Indian cemetery with Indians buried two or three deep. The Indian bodies were removed and reburied in the Catholic cemetery. Weikamp is now the only one actually buried in the cemetery. The crypt is only opened once a year in August. All that is left in the tiny coffin (Weikamp was only around 5 ft tall) is a hip bone.161

Much in the same way that the Native American community was absorbed and assimilated into the European community there is a rising sense that the same is occurring with the Catholic community. There is a growing nostalgia for what is perceived to be lost or dying. Stereotyped notions of these two communities then get disseminated throughout the community as a whole and re-appropriated into the community as a whole, showing that elements are not necessarily lost as the larger community observes, but adapted and changed to fit contemporary needs.

Common sources of Cross Village history are derived from an interesting array of materials, including websites from local businesses such as the Legs Inn bar and restaurant, locally published short books such as *Old Arbre Croche*, a cookbook titled *Cross Village: A Selection of Tastes, Art, and Memories*, oral history, Wikipedia, other tourist and local literature, and of course the places themselves. I use these sources in order to discover how the residents of Cross Village portray their history to themselves.

---

161 Shurtleff, 17. For a picture of Weikamp’s crypt see Fig. 14 in Appendix.
and the world. It is important to note which stories they emphasize and how they tell them. The stories they choose to perpetuate determine the history.

Stories and place cannot be separated from one another. Stories put people in relationship to the larger world, giving them a sense of ownership, and construct an identity. Whether the stories are factually sound or not appears to be of little importance. Perceptions of landscape are constructed and maintained through the retelling of stories about these particular places. The land is a reminder of a story that conveys an important aspect of a people. “And location tied people to their roots, to ancestors now departed.”

It is important to know what the people of Cross Village say and write about their history. In this sense, “the stories are the voices of the people.” The following is the introduction to Cross Village: A Selection of Tastes, Art, and Memories, which provides a brief history of the village:

This book brings together the food and lore and memories of Cross Village residents, many of whom are related to the early settlers. The diversity of this Village culture, Native American and European, will flavor the recipes and stories, and remind us that we live and preserve a remarkable place, perhaps the oldest settlement in Emmet County. Names connect us to the past that still breathes in this northeastern Lake Michigan village: Shurtleff, Gascon, Metevier, Wagley, Redpath, Weikamp.

Cross Village is named in at least three languages. It was called ‘L’Arbre Croche’ by the early white traders for a tall, crooked fir tree on the bluff a few miles north of Middle Village (this tree long since cut down). ‘Waganakisi’ was the Odowa name meaning ‘crooked tree,’ and ‘Anamiewatigoing,’ ‘tree of prayer, or cross,’ is still the Indian name for the village.

Documents say Jesuit priests visited this village in 1691 and established a mission. It is popularly believed that Father Marquette erected the original cross on the bluff. (According to Mary Belle Shurtleff’s history, ‘Old Arbre Croche,’ today’s cross is a good deal smaller).

---

162 Wind and Lewis, 149.
164 Shurtleff’s account of this is as follows: “This seems to be a fitting point at which to digress and discuss the origin of the cross on the bluff at Cross Village, from which came the Indian name Anamiewatigoing—at the tree of prayer, the French name, LaCroix, and the present name Cross Village. It is popularly believed that Father Marquette planted the original cross on the bluff. While it is entirely possible that he
The connection to the past survives in Cross Village because it has not been severed by indifference to its beauty; the village has never lost a willingness to welcome diverse peoples. The past has not been wholly swept away by change, or forgotten. Cross Village is still on the frontier; the wild place where vast waters meet the land, where people of all nationalities might meet and live in harmony, as it has been for over three hundred years. The ‘tree of prayer,’ whether Catholic, or Presbyterian, or symbolic of native spirituality, is a place of peace. Welcome to our village.

--Laura Chaney
Laura owned the Cross Village General Store 1978-1988. She is a long time resident of Cross Village.165

It should be apparent from this selection that there is a great deal of importance placed upon names and symbols. It should also be apparent that history plays a prominent role in the construction of the identity of the town and those who dwell within it.

Another example, from the Legs Inn Restaurant’s website (a popular restaurant in Cross Village), gives a similar historical account; once again, with a focus on names and symbols:

Early historical accounts indicate that Father Jacques Marquette, the famous French Jesuit who endeared himself to the Native Indian population of Northern Michigan, planted a huge white cross on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan before his death in 1675. Today, a replica of this cross stands at the edge of the bluff and is visible off the shore, far into Lake Michigan.

As late as 1787, as many as twenty tribes populated the region and met here around tribal council fires. To the Indians who populated the numerous historic missions in the area, Cross Village was known as the ‘Land of the Cross.’ To the French, this region was known as L’Arbre Croche; to the Ottawas, it was called ‘Wau-gaw-naw-ke-ze’; and to the White man at the time, it was simply known as ‘Land of the Crooked Tree.’166

As mentioned earlier, in 1963 Mary Belle Shurtleff, a long time resident of Cross Village, Michigan, wrote a short book entitled Old Arbre Croche: A Factual and...
Comprehensive History of Cross Village, Michigan. This book can be seen as an attempt to identify the village through constructing particular notions of history by addressing connections to place, materiality, the importance of names, and religious and other historical figures. Shurtleff’s history primarily concerns the portrayal of Indians in the Cross Village area. I contend that Mary Belle Shurtleff’s Old Arbre Croche provides neither a “factual” nor a “comprehensive” account of the history of Cross Village, but rather an inaccurate and personal construction of the history of Cross Village. This is made evident by critically analyzing how she utilizes the selected sources she employs and the numerous vague references she makes throughout her work. Shurtleff’s work is important when studying the current residents of Cross Village because many later sources concerning the town are taken directly from Shurtleff’s work. Her view of history has been generally accepted by those who write about the town today.

It is first important to note that Shurtleff is not a scholar. She is a long time resident of Cross Village with a family connection to the town dating back to the 1870s. She considers her work to be “factual,” suggesting that what she has recorded is both true and accurate. I assume that she also considers this book to be “comprehensive,” meaning complete. However, the book is only thirty three pages, eight of which are pictures. Throughout, she presents fragments of history from a very Euro-centric point of view with a number of references to support what she has included. Richard White addresses this manner of reconstructing history in terms of reconfiguring a past like a puzzle. “In these fragments of contact and change are glimpses of both a world in disorder and the attempts of people to reorder it through an amalgam of old and new logics.” Shurtleff uses the “old logics” of nineteenth century writers to reconstruct this past using the “new logics” developed by her as an insider reconstructing her own history. She also claims to have obtained “the” Indian perspective as well, but it is rather unclear where her sources came from since few are mentioned to support this claim.

167 “The first district school in Emmet County was established in Cross Village in 1870. For several years it was taught by John S. Shurtleff, who came from Mackinac in 1870. He was elected Judge of Probate in 1872 and held that office for eight years. In 1873 Mrs. Shurtleff was appointed postmistress and for several years kept the office in her home.” Mr. and Mrs. John S. Shurtleff were Mary Shurtleff’s grandparents. (Shurtleff, 19, Romig, 141).

168 White, 10-11.
One of the first steps in addressing any book is to consider who it was written for and why. Shurtleff states this from the beginning:

This booklet has been prepared to preserve for the residents of the village some of our historic background and to help others better to understand and appreciate the Indians, whose life-long friendship it has been the author’s privilege to enjoy and whose cooperation she herewith gratefully acknowledges.\(^\text{169}\)

In this brief passage Shurtleff identifies her audience as the residents of Cross Village, and also others that she does not specify. She clearly identifies herself with the village and presents this as “some” of the village’s history for the sake of safeguarding what is left, suggesting that much of it may have been lost; much like the Indians themselves, according to Shurtleff. She also makes it clear that this was primarily written in order to “understand” the Indians and to greater “appreciate” them. She even acknowledges that the Indians are still here, that she has a personal relationship with them, and that they have contributed to this work. However, it is not entirely clear what the relationship is between herself and the Indians, nor to what extent she still considers them active participants in Cross Village.

So how does Shurtleff view Cross Village; what are the important aspects she highlights? The title and the picture on the cover are quite revealing of her perception of the place. Why did she title the book *Old Arbre Croche* instead of Cross Village? This title suggests that her present connection to the place is directly tied to the past naming of Cross Village. This is further exemplified by her rather extensive description of past names Cross Village has undergone, with a focus on materiality, landscape, and Indian influence:

To place in chronological order the names by which Cross Village has been known in the course of its history is a difficult task, since these names are in three languages and more than one was in use at the same time. The region around the village was undoubtedly first known as Waganakisi, the Ottawa word for crooked tree, which was applied to a scattered Indian settlement extending along the shore from Cross Village to Harbor Springs. At the same period this Ottawa settlement was called L’Arbre Croche by the white traders. These names were given to the

\(^{169}\) Shurtleff, Forward.
The symbols of the crooked tree and the cross are significant because they were both used as identifiers of and ways of establishing power over the landscape. However, they were perceived differently by Native people and white settlers. To the Native people of the area the crooked tree appeared to have been seen as a physical landmark to distinguish the region from the areas surrounding it. It was a convenient meeting place for various groups because it was well known and easily identifiable for multiple groups of people. It was a symbol they owned and utilized for practical purposes. When the white settlers arrived they initially appear to have adopted the tree for similar reasons. It was a way to identify where they were geographically since it was along the coast of Lake Michigan, where most travel routes were located at the time. Both Native people and white settlers named the region because of this important physical object. However, this symbol took on new meaning when it was removed. Shurtleff explains:

> The tree was of such exceptional height and shape that it was used as a landmark by the passing canoes. John Tanner, who was captured by the Indians and spent many years among them, saw this tree when he first visited the village. Later, in the account of his adventures published in 1830, he wrote with indignation of the Indian who cut down this remarkable tree “through mere wantonness!”

Obviously Tanner considered the tree to be more than just a tree. Because of his many years among his Native captors he may have appropriated their identification with the tree and the meaning they placed upon it. But why was the actual tree important? Couldn’t the symbol itself, and its importance, remain without the physical presence of the tree? And why was it that a Native person chopped it down and a white person was the one angered? We can only assume that Tanner was not the only one angered by this apparently unrestrained act. Although neither Shurtleff nor Tanner’s account states the opinions of any Native people concerning this act, one might assume that the Native people of the region were most likely disgusted as well. This appears to have been an individual act, and perhaps one of protest. We are not presented with the identity of the Native individual so we cannot know for certain what his motivations were. It is possible

---

170 Shurtleff, 2.
171 Shurtleff, 2.
that he may not have known about the significance or meaning of the tree and was simply gathering firewood. In any case, many gatherings, councils, and events took place at the site of the tree, giving it historical and religious significance as a sacred site. With the physical loss of the tree the meaning behind the symbol was not lost, but was soon transferred to another object, the Christian cross.

Shurtleff continues her account of the history of naming Cross Village by describing a shift in naming, and a re-conceptualization of previous naming, when a cross is placed in the area by French Jesuit missionaries:

When, at some early date, a large cross was erected on the bluff at Cross Village the Indians called the village Anamiewatigoing, meaning at the tree of prayer or cross. This still remains the Indian name for the town. About 1830, when a mission was established at Harbor Springs, the southernmost point of L’Arbre Croche, Cross Village was known as Old Arbre Croche to distinguish it from Harbor Springs, which the missionaries then called New Arbre Croche, or simply Arbre Croche. By 1847 the name LaCroix was also in use. This name was retained until 1875 when it was changed to the present form.172

What is fascinating is what occurred when a large wooden cross was placed in the same area as the tree. The Native people renamed the area after the cross, calling it a “tree of prayer.” This demonstrates a continuation of how the area was perceived in terms of physical objects and the symbols they represented. To the Native people this “new tree” was much the same as the old one. It took on a similar significance as a marker of landscape and a meeting place. Yet, to the white settlers this new symbol had a different significance. This was a portable symbol that, when placed, designated the area as a Christian landscape that should be controlled over by Christian ideals and practices. In this way the cross became a way of establishing power over a landscape. The symbol took on a different significance due to the intentions of the ones placing it. The intention of the missionaries was one of ownership. By placing the physical cross on the landscape that had recently been deprived of its symbol the missionaries established a new power center instead of continuing a previous one. The Native people were now the ones who had to adapt, using their previous constructions of the meaning of objects. The power relation, in terms of control and perceptions of landscape, shifted when

172 Shurtleff, 2.
interactions and conceptions of a symbol were not fully understood or agreed upon. However, the desire to carry on previous naming traditions continued by white settlers as the area was regularly referred to as L’Arbre Croche into the mid-nineteenth century. Shurtleff herself reaches back into this tradition by titling her book *Old Arbre Croche* to demonstrate a connection to the past notion of this region; revealing her nostalgia.

The picture on the front of the book is also revealing of how Shurtleff views the village and its history. The picture is of “Edward Kenoshmeg, an Ottawa, in full war regalia.” He is pictured wearing a full feathered headdress and additional “traditional” clothing. He is postured with his arms crossed with a rather serious expression on his face. Before one even opens the book it should be clear to the reader that the presentation of Native people will be a considerable factor.

Shurtleff begins the book by presenting an image of the physical landscape of the Cross Village area; an image described in order to give the reader a sense of actually being in this place and an appreciation for it. Her initial description states that, “Cross Village, one of the oldest settlements in Emmet County, is delightfully located on a bluff about one hundred feet high overlooking Lake Michigan. The northwest wind blowing across the expanse of the lake makes the air invigorating in summer and penetrating in winter.” She goes on to describe the surrounding area from the perspective of one standing on the bluff overlooking the lake on a clear day.

Shurtleff draws nearly all of her historical data concerning Cross Village from nineteenth and early twentieth century sources. “The comments of various travelers who visited this section or met with Indians from L’Arbre Croche during the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century give us some idea of the state of civilization of the local Indians at the time.” The degree of civilization being judged from Euro-American perspectives portrays the Ottawas as “more civilized” than the Chippewas. Shurtleff goes on to explain this notion of “civilization” through vague terms. For example, “the Ottawas were considered less savage and fickle than the

---

173 Shurtleff, Cover.
174 Shurtleff, 1.
175 Shurtleff, 6.
176 Primarily John Tanner, Alexander Henry, Thomas McKenney, and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.
Chippewas and from the first were more kindly disposed toward the whites.”¹⁷⁷ She is not specific concerning what she means by “savage,” “fickle,” or “kindly disposed.” Later in her work she provides similar descriptions and one can see a negative portrayal of the Chippewas throughout her work.

Early European explorers and settlers defined civilization in Native people by what the Europeans saw of their own culture reflected in the Native people. For instance, Shurtleff describes various accounts by Europeans concerning how they viewed the Ottawas. They saw these people as civilized because they developed agriculture, were willing to trade, and adapted European style of dress. The Chippewas on the other hand were not considered civilized because they were warlike, less willing to trade, and more traditional and less willing to adapt to European values.¹⁷⁸

Shurtleff portrays Native people in a manner that is problematic because she claims to speak for and about them from a stance of an intimate relationship. However, it is not possible from examining her work to determine whether this is really their voice being conveyed through her. Peter Nabokov sheds some light on this issue, but tends to raise more questions than he resolves. For instance, he raises the following questions in order for the reader to grasp the larger context of how Indians are portrayed in history: “Who has what at stake in any Indian historical discourse? Where are the relevant circles of a narrative’s rightful ‘owners’ and implicated listeners? From what social constituency does it arise, how extensive are the ripples of its intended reception, and what are the widest ramifications of its perpetuation?”¹⁷⁹ These questions are presented so the reader knows the problems inherent in discussing Indian history. He specifically addresses issues of audience and agenda as being particularly troubling considerations. He answers these questions in a manner that is particularly relevant to a study of Shurtleff’s work. “We also catch hints of that common motivation behind any people’s historical narrative – the desire to stake some sort of claim on behalf of some constituency, even if it is only to prioritize a particular brand of historical

¹⁷⁷ Shurtleff, 4.
¹⁷⁸ Shurtleff, 6-7.
One can notice two main connections to Shurtleff’s work. She is claiming to speak for a community, the Native and non-Native population of Cross Village, and she is constructing her own selective “brand” of history to do so; mainly through the use of nineteenth century romanticized texts. Additionally, Nabokov presents a question that presents two ways of addressing the disagreements concerning the very nature of history. “Should its priority be facts and chronologies or themes and attitudes?” To answer this question he proposes that “the trick lies in simultaneously tracking down hard facts and their cultural and historical contexts and nuances, without which they don’t mean much.” Shurtleff claims to have the “facts,” flawed they may be, but fails to provide the larger contexts and subtle problems in her sources. She merely accepts what others have provided as the only interpretation.

A further examination of Shurtleff’s work shows that she provides a history of the early inhabitants of the region taken primarily from nineteenth century sources, not the French Jesuits, who arrived in the area nearly two centuries before many of the people she draws from. One of the people she relies heavily on to construct her history is Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. In 1823 he married Jane Johnston, a member of a prominent family in the area and part Ojibwe herself. She helped significantly with Schoolcraft’s research.

Schoolcraft has been viewed by many as a scholar and early anthropologist of the Native Americans of Michigan. He traveled through much of the Northern Michigan area studying the Native populations in the 1820s and 30s. He was also concerned with the possibility of mineral resources and strategic locations for military outposts. For some of his travels he was accompanied by Michigan’s first governor, Lewis Cass, who dictated some of the more “practical” agendas of the trip. Schoolcraft provides a brief history of the region from first contact to his present day. He also included detailed topographical, geographical, and meteorological data; as well as detailed accounts of what he encountered along the way. His writings include a number of poems, songs, stories, myths, and legends. Some are original works by Schoolcraft, others were told to and recorded by him from the Native people. There also appears to be an attempt by

---

180 Nabokov, 49.
181 Nabokov, 67.
182 Nabokov, 234.
183 Schoolcraft, xxiv.
Schoolcraft to understand the languages of the people he encounters. The writings by Schoolcraft provide an insight into his observations and interpretations of what he encountered as well as a demonstration of the romanticized filter in which Schoolcraft viewed his surroundings. For instance, Schoolcraft praised the poetic charm of Native stories but does not appear to view them as reliable history.\textsuperscript{184} He demonstrates nineteenth century conceptions of these stories and how a European would categorize and record what was being told. This often led to misunderstandings of the Native peoples of the regions he traveled through.

Shurtleff admits that there is not much known about the early inhabitants of the region, and that what is known is considered controversial. Shurtleff mentions an early tribe called the Mascoutens. She gets her information from stories told to Schoolcraft by other Indians (Ottawa), said to have defeated and driven them out, and that “this tribe had a reputation for deceit and treachery and seem to have been restless and warlike.”\textsuperscript{185} Of course the Ottawa would portray their enemies whom they had defeated and driven out in a negative light. Shurtleff then goes on to say that “the above facts are recorded by history.”\textsuperscript{186} By whom, when, under what circumstances and for what purpose? She is very vague on this and doesn’t back it up. Additionally, she claims that “tradition furnishes a more thrilling account and more intimate details.”\textsuperscript{187} She emphasizes the importance of stories and romanticizes it by calling it “thrilling.” She calls these stories “legends” but it is not clear how she uses the term. She calls this story “one of the favorite stories of the Ottawas.”\textsuperscript{188} The story that follows presents the Mascoutens in a very negative light, portraying them as childish aggressors who were forgetful and lazy and the Ottawas as the restrained, cunning, powerful, and prepared; but in the story it is the Ottawa who slaughter women and children. It is not clear what her source is for her retelling of this story.

Another important figure Shurtleff draws upon is Alexander Henry. Henry was an English trader in the Great Lakes region during the 1760s. He traveled to the Michilimackinac region soon after the British took control of it from the French. He was

\textsuperscript{184} Nabokov, 8.
\textsuperscript{185} Shurtleff, 3.
\textsuperscript{186} Shurtleff, 3.
\textsuperscript{187} Shurtleff, 3.
\textsuperscript{188} Shurtleff, 3.
witness to an Indian attack on Fort Michilimackinac and was taken prisoner by the Indians; living among them for the next year until his release. His accounts of his experiences were recorded much later, so contain numerous errors, but are still considered reliable by many. Most of his writings center on the fur trade and interactions with Native Americans in the region. His writings tend to be quite detailed and descriptive as well as providing a considerable amount of his own interpretations of what the Indians he encountered were telling him about their beliefs and practices. However, much of the information appears to be clouded by emotion and the lack of proper memory recollection. It is interesting to note that Shurtleff’s interest in his story is only “because it mentions the Ottawas of L’Arbre Croche.”

Shurtleff also draws upon Col. Thomas L. McKenney, who journeyed from Washington D.C. to Fond du Lac in Northern Michigan in 1826. He was sent there by the president as a representative of the Indian Department to negotiate a treaty with the Chippewa Indians of the area. He was accompanied most of the way by Michigan Governor Lewis Cass and encountered additional notable figures such as Henry Schoolcraft along the way. He developed a brief written vocabulary of Chippewa words, kept a journal of the account of the signing of the treaty, and recorded a number of engravings, songs, poems, and descriptions of the landscapes he encountered. He tends to have a romanticized perspective on the region, providing descriptive accounts as well as his own interpretations, agendas, and opinions on what he encountered along the way.

When individuals are first introduced they tend to ask where the other is from, what location they originated or most strongly identify with. Place, then, becomes an important identifier for individuals and communities. This makes ties to place and place naming a crucial element in how people think of themselves and orient themselves to the larger world around them.

People of a particular region or locality tie themselves to a place not simply by referring and conceiving of it in an overall spatial or geographically sense, but also to the environmental and landscape elements of the place as well. It is the ties to a place that allows one to name it. Place names are often designated according to perceptions of landscape, the use of materiality and symbols, the imposition of a religious understanding.

---

189 Shurtleff, 5.
of the world, and the importance of historical figures. Naming becomes a way of exerting power over a landscape, such as creating a sacred space. It then becomes a marker of identity and a way of orienting oneself to the world.

However, place cannot entirely be separated from story. One particular example demonstrates how intimately stories and place are tied to one another. The area known as Sleeping Bear Dunes is typically identified for its large sand dunes overlooking Lake Michigan. The average person when they think of this place will most likely associate it with its physical features. However, viewed from another angle it can tell a different story:

The name is derived from a Chippewa Indian legend that tells of a bear and her two cubs forced to swim across Lake Michigan to escape a forest fire. The mother reached the shore safely and climbed to the top of a dune to await the cubs, who lagged behind and never arrived. She still maintains her vigil in the form of a dark hill of sand atop a plateau, while the errant cubs have become the North and South Manitou islands.¹⁹⁰

One must also remember that Shurtleff’s history of Cross Village could not be told without consideration for the important role of place. The construction of any local or regional history demonstrates a considerable connection to the landscape and the names that have been attributed to that landscape. Keith Basso describes the role place and place-naming has in the telling of stories. Like Connerton, Basso views the telling of stories and their ties to place as a selective reconstruction that takes on a very communal and identity forming function. For instance, he first describes how place has a role in reconstructing a history. “Building and sharing place-worlds, in other words, is not only a means of reviving former times but also of revising them, a means of exploring not merely how things might have been but also how, just possibly, they might have been different from what others have supposed.”¹⁹¹ Basso demonstrates how there is no fixed description of a place due to different perceptions of landscape. Shurtleff does not take this into consideration. She believes her account to be the one true description of Cross Village history. Not only are there various ways of telling a story in relation to place, but various ways these reconstructions can be used to create an identity. Basso explains that;

¹⁹⁰ Michigan, Wisconsin Tourbook, 98.
What people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth … If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. We are, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine.¹⁹²

Like Connerton, Basso sees a deep connection between the social and the individual. However, he also adds the element of place, implying that self and society cannot be considered apart from place. In this manner perceptions of place become a means of identity construction. Basso goes on to explain; “Hence, as numerous writers have noted, places possess a marked capacity for triggering acts of self-reflection, inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, or memories of who one used to be, or musings on who one might become.”¹⁹³ So when someone reflects on their ties to place they are also reflecting on their notion of the self. From the point that identity and place are interrelated Basso implies that this connection can be taken one step further to show how people view their relationship to the rest of the world. This place-identity becomes a means by which a people construct a sense of orientation to the rest of the world. Basso explains that “place-based thoughts about the self lead commonly to thoughts of other things—other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associations that ramify unaccountably within the expanding awareness that they themselves engender.”¹⁹⁴ “Places also provide points from which to look out on life, to grasp one’s position in the order of things, to contemplate events from somewhere in particular.”¹⁹⁵ In this regard the manner in which one constructs a sense of place is reflected in a sense of identity that can be expanded to encompass a whole perception of the world.

¹⁹² Basso, 7.
¹⁹³ Basso, 107.
¹⁹⁴ Basso, 107.
¹⁹⁵ Basso, 109.
CONCLUSION

What people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth … If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. We *are*, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine.

Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*

Stories are important in the way that they tell people who they are today by telling them who they were, by telling a version of the community’s history. These stories are constructed to appeal to a particular audience. Local residents may tell each other intimate stories about the past that cannot be properly transmitted to those “on the outside.”

These stories and the process of mythmaking become a sort of drawn out intergenerational game of “telephone,” in which certain elements are forgotten, and others altered for various reasons. At times it may be advantageous to recall a particular date, event, or individual to accomplish some goal. The way in which stories are retold and transmitted determines how they will in turn be remembered; context cannot be ignored.

There is a material reality to any event. These stories hold little weight without the “stuff” that binds them. Material objects play a crucial role in creating a sense of imagery through a tangible connection. The material objects themselves may be remade or recreated to make the story come to life. In this way, through stories about it and recreations of it, the object becomes much more than itself.

Stories are told through objects, but materiality alone often does not suffice for one to draw a deep connection between the self and the object. The object must be transformed into a symbol and carry a deeper meaning and significance to the one using the symbol. The object retains its important status only after being made into this symbol. In this manner the meaning behind an object survives long after the object itself has vanished.
Each community has a unique history and many rely upon mythic historical figures and events for their identity. Specifically through symbols and naming we can see how stories have wider implications for how we view ourselves temporally and spatially in the construction of identity. However, we must realize that these constructions of identity imply a colonial past in which power played a decisive role in forming myths and histories of particular regions.

A critical examination of Shurtleff’s book demonstrates that one needs to be careful when claiming an accurate portrayal of local or regional history; even if one is intimately related to the landscape and history being depicted. One needs to take a closer look at the audience, agenda, and sources that an author uses in order to discern what is actually being presented. Shurtleff’s reconstruction of the history of Cross Village provides one lens through which to view the history of a people, but is far from complete or entirely correct. Although, it is important to note that the retelling of stories as factual history becomes a key identity construct for a community and is deeply personal. It is crucial when trying to understand a community to consider the meaning they place on events, objects, people, and places. Shurtleff’s Cross Village history, though flawed in many regards, is a means by which the contemporary residents of Cross Village have constructed an identity and orient themselves to the rest of the world. And it is by learning someone’s identity that one can add to ones’ own. One must first understand the use of stories, and the objects and symbols that are utilized to tell them, in order to grasp a community’s perception of place as a means of creating an identity and orientation to the world.

There is a saying among some of the residents in Cross Village that, “what happens in Cross Village everyone knows.” This sense of close knit community knowledge can be transmitted to their perceived understandings of the past as well. But many people don’t realize that the past is, and always has been, a mess. The retelling of stories and the recreation of practices and events are often simply perceived and constructed outside of their original context. In the case of Cross Village people often turn to traditions outside their own to gain a historical and sacred connection to the land. Sarah M. Pike explains this problem in her book, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*. “People of mostly European descent lost their connection to the land of their
ancestors with the immigrant generation and only gradually discovered places of power in their new homes. In part, nostalgia for beliefs of the past and attraction to exotic traditions was a yearning for sacred places now absent.” Space is experienced, whether it is individual or communal. Intentionality can have a lot to do with the construction of a sacred space, and Cross Village is permeated with a sense of sacredness.

The Holy Cross Annual Picnic has been held on church grounds since the year of the Great Fire in 1918. It is considered to be a homecoming festival and continuation of earlier Native gatherings. At this event Indian goods, music, dances, teepees, and dress are displayed for the whole community.

Mary Tekakwitha B. Knapp’s short book, *Powwow at Old Arbre Croche*, takes the reader on a journey back in time to a late 1940’s Holy Cross Powwow, as seen through the eyes of a child. Knapp’s book is full of stereotypical photographs and drawings of Native people in feathered headdresses standing next to teepees or posing for a photograph next to the church priest. The images she describes are of people essentially “playing Indian.” For example, early in the book she recalls this scene: “Oh, no! He has a tomahawk in his hand! He’s pretending to chase the white man! Now they’re both laughing. These are real Indians. Ottawas and Chippewas have lived here for hundreds of years. They’ve set up an Indian village for the weekend and they stay right here, cooking over campfires. See, the teepees are over there in the field.” She describes these scenes as being playful and entertaining, yet historically accurate, culturally authentic, and uninterrupted.

In another example she provides her understanding of what she has witnessed in the context of history and historical continuation. In this scene a dance has just been completed: “The Indians are finished, and the crowd is drifting away. Now the Indians will take down their teepees just as they did every fall hundreds of years ago when they moved their village south for the trapping season. It’s like looking at history.” Catholics, and others in the Cross Village community, have included “Indian dances” into

---

198 Knapp, 8.
199 Knapp, 23.
their own celebrations. This interpretation is supported by the placement of “Indian dances” on the various annual picnic posters and the recollections and pictures from residents such as Knapp. This demonstrates that hybridity is not an equal and simple combination of cultural elements from two or more societies, but an act of consumption; of appropriating Native elements. Shurtleff’s work further demonstrates and exemplifies this analysis:

Old settlers who attended these picnics always spoke with enthusiasm of the good times enjoyed on these occasions and of the Indian dances. The latter were performed with great energy and gusto by the Indian women in intricately decorated broadcloth skirts and gaudy calico blouses, and by Indian men whooping wildly and brandishing war clubs.

In spite of their contact with the white people for two or three centuries, the Indians still retain many of their old customs. Some of these may have been adapted from those of the early settlers.

Events like these picnics demonstrate that traditions become invented according to important needs. Where one stands determines how one views a place or event. These events also represent a deep and nostalgic connection to the past. Shurtleff’s work conveys a sense of nostalgia throughout, and Knapp’s epilogue captures this sense of loss as well. “Most of the Indians are now gone from Cross Village. The teepees have been taken down and packed away, and the soft, thrilling drumbeats no longer are heard. The second Sunday in August is still set aside for former residents to return to their roots, but the event is called what it is—the Homecoming.” The memory of these events and places are about the past as well as the present, but raise a number of important questions. What is to be remembered? Who decides? For whom does it matter? Why remember? How does one remember? Places are archives of memory and are used to create a constructed reality.

In response to the question, “Where the Hell is Cross Village?,” one might appropriately ask “who the Hell cares?” The community of Cross Village obviously cares about itself and its history. Academics can use this community as a case study to gain insight into how people perceive of and use place, memory, and stories as a means of orientation and identity construction.

---

200 See figures 12 and 13 in Appendix.
201 Shurtleff, 23.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Figure 4: A close up of the Michilimackinac region from Figure 3

Figure 5: Close up of “Index Map,” from *Michigan ... Route Book*, 1916. Private Collection
Figure 6: Painted Wequetonsing sign. Framed area to the right reads: “AT THE LITTLE BAY From Wikwedonsing, Wikwed is Ojibwa for bay” (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History)

Figure 7: Fort Michilimackinac sign near the reconstructed Colonial Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City Visitor Center)
Figure 8: View of the Cross from the top of the bluff, overlooking Lake Michigan (Cross Village, MI)
Figure 9: Entrance to Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery (Cross Village, MI)

Figure 10: Sign above the entrance to the Fr. Albert Langheim, OFM Parish Center (Cross Village, MI)
Figure 11: Portrait of Our Lady of Victory (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History)

Figure 12: Annual Holy Cross Pow Wow Poster (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History)
Figure 13: Annual Holy Cross Picnic Poster (Museum of L’Arbre Croche History)

Figure 14: Father John B. Weikamp’s crypt (Cross Village, MI)