8. Reencountering Trade Legacies, Indigenous Histories, and the Early Leopoldine Society Circle in the Vienna Weltmuseum

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Abstract: This chapter concerns the Great Lakes Indigenous peoples whose artifacts may be found in the Vienna Weltmuseum. It situates these artifacts within the larger framework of exchange modalities among Indigenous peoples, together with the Leopoldine Society, an organization founded in Vienna in 1829 to minister to German-speaking Catholics in North America. To convey this framework, the chapter recalls Indigenous artifact collections of British officers active in the region, as well as the gift giving of Odawa leader Jean-Baptiste Assiginack. It also devotes close attention to Georg Schwarz, whose inventory of Indigenous artifacts remains the centerpiece of the North American collection in Vienna. In Assiginack and Schwarz, the issues of the chapter converge—the Habsburg turn to North America, the Leopoldine Society, and the complex overlays among the ambitions of Austrian traders, practices of Indigenous exchange, and the contemporary Weltmuseum collection.

Keywords: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack, Austrian-American relations, Frederic Baraga, Johann Georg Schwarz, Leopoldine Society, Odawa, Ojibwe, Pays d'en Haut, Weltmuseum

The Indigenous Place: Austrian Trade Legacies in North America

The increased dynamism of the Austrian economy in the two decades before 1848 should be written into the new histories of the relationship between Habsburg Austria and Native America. Historically, it is this increased

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dynamism that forms the broader context for Austrian engagement with North America, as Habsburg elites during these years invested in networks capable of sustaining Austrian political and commercial interests abroad. In the 1830s and 1840s, the Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region—notably, the Anishinaabe groups (or plural, Anishinaabeg), the Ojibwe (Chippewa), Odawa (Odaawaa/Ottawa), and Potawatomi, as well as the Hocąk (Ho-Cunk/Winnebago), and Mamaceqtaw (Menominee)—played a role in these North American networks whose legacies reach down to the present.[1]

That role is the subject of historical interest. Indigenous peoples became the focus of early missionary activity by the Leopoldine Society, an organization founded in Vienna in 1829 with the purpose of ministering to German-speaking Catholics in North America. But that role is also of contemporary interest, inasmuch as the cultural artifacts acquired from these Indigenous peoples by the Leopoldine missionaries and their agents constitute the center of interest in the North American collection at the *Weltmuseum*, the principal ethnographic museum in Vienna.[2] This chapter is about the Great Lakes Indigenous peoples whose artifacts may be found in the Weltmuseum, and it is about the Leopoldine Society. At the beginning, economic dynamism in Austria brings both into focus.

The two decades prior to 1848 in Austria were marked by sustained economic growth and expanding commerce. Trade through the Austrian port city of Trieste, for example, began to recover following the British blockade during the Napoleonic wars, as maritime imports doubled, with exports rising by 60 percent.[3] Indeed, the weak economic performance of the 1810s and 1820s leads Gustav Otruba to see evidence of a revival after 1830, including the introduction of modern, large-scale industrial enterprise. Likewise, the index of industrialization compiled by Richard Rudolph suggests a steady period of economic expansion from 1830 onwards, with

1 Anishinaabe is an endonym used by Indigenous peoples to indicate belonging to a cultural and linguistic group that can include the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Mississaugas, Nipissing, and Algonquin peoples.

2 For an overview that situates the North American collection within the history of the museum, see Christian Feest, "Das Museum für Völkerkunde in Wien," in *Das Museum für Völkerkunde* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1980), 13–34. On the recent transition of this Vienna institution from a "museum of ethnology" to a Weltmuseum, see Claudia Augustat, "Dealing with the Colonial Past at the Weltmuseum Wien: A Curator's Perspective," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 32 (2019): 17–31.

3 Aleš Skřivan, "Trade Gateway to the Habsburg Monarchy. On Trieste's Status, Development and Importance to the Mid-19th Century," *West Bohemian Historical Review* 10, no. 1 (2020): 1–23 (here 23).

the 1830–55 interval outpacing the years between 1855 and 1890.[4] To be sure, Austria was less urbanized, and its economy remained less productive than that of Western Europe. But as David Good concludes, structural transformation and institutional change had taken hold, with the result that ongoing expansion could withstand short-term fluctuations. In Austria, a modern, sustained growth economy was now manifest. Economic cycles would persist, including short term discontinuities, such as the crash of 1873. But from the 1830s, there would be no reversal in the upward trend of the Austrian economy.[5]

Inside Austria, Habsburg leaders directed their attention to economic activity. With his 6 April 1829 *Cabinetschreiben*, for example, Emperor Franz I ordered the establishment of a bureau of statistics to coordinate recordkeeping in Austria, an undertaking he had delayed for two decades.[6] The product of that bureau, *Tafeln zur Statistik der österreichischen Monarchie*, registered advances in trade and the economy, while data included there furnished the basis for the first attempt outside England to estimate national product.[7] By establishing a statistical baseline, moreover, the *Tafeln* facilitated other initiatives to boost economic growth. With his appointment by the emperor, for example, Alois von Lederer became the first Austrian consul general to take up his post in the United States in 1820. According to his original instructions, Lederer was to "further the already existing trade relations" between the two countries, especially Austrian exports.[8] To fulfill that

4 Gustav Otruba, "Österreichs Industrie und Arbeiterschaft von der Manufaktur- zur Fabrikatur-epoche (1790–1848)," *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 15, no. 10 (1971): 569–604 (here 575); Richard L. Rudolph, "The Pattern of Austrian Industrial Growth from the Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century," *Austrian History Yearbook* 11 (January 1975): 3–25. The three-stage progression described by Freudenberger—1) 1750–1811 great momentum; 2) 1811–35 retardation and reorganization; 3) 1835–50 renewed momentum—sets a similar trajectory. Herman Freudenberger, *Lost Momentum: Austrian Economic Development 1750s–1830s* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2003), 19.

5 David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California press, 1984), 34–73. See also, John Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 89–111.

6 Direktion der administrativen Statistik, *Skizze einer Geschichte des kaiserl. königl. statischen Bureaus in den Jahren 1829-1853*, vol. 4, no. 1, *Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiete der Statistik* (Vienna: K.u.k. Staatsdruckerei, 1855); Bundesamt für Statistik, "Die Entwicklung der amtlichen Statistik in Österreich," *Progress in Public Administration* 5, no. 3 (January 1932): 329–42.

7 Nachum T. Gross, "An Estimate of National Product in Austria in 1841," *The Journal of Economic History* 28, no. 1 (1968): 80–101 (here 81).

8 Rudolf Agstner, *Austria (-Hungary) and Its Consulates in the United States of America Since 1820*, Forschungen zur Geschichte des österreichischen auswärtigen Dienstes, vol. 4 (Vienna: London: Global Book Marketing, 2012), 224.

task, in 1828 Lederer carried out orders from Vienna in negotiating a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Austria and the United States. That treaty foresaw the opening of a consular post in Austria by the United States, which opened in 1830 with the Austrian Johann Georg Schwarz, or more commonly, Georg Schwarz, serving as the American representative, while the treaty itself entered force in 1831.[9] As Consul General, Lederer had been charged to "further existing trade relations," though his actual duties were broadly sketched. Indeed, in noting the uncommon formulations in the consular instructions given to Lederer, Rudolf Agstner observes that much of his job consisted in what today would be called "industrial espionage."[10] And of course, in considering the appointment, state secretary Klemens Metternich always insisted that a consul to the United States required a thorough political education.[11]

Established in April 1829 as a mission to North America, the Leopoldine Society is deeply embedded in this nexus of the Austrian state, economic dynamism, and new global initiatives. Because legal measures to suppress political dissent also prohibited the founding of new religious associations, Emperor Franz himself personally approved the creation of the Society.[12] In step with the emperor, whose foreign policy he greatly shaped, Metternich also conveyed his personal written blessing to the Society, while internal correspondence between Vienna and Leopoldine missionaries abroad moved through the New York consulate he administered.[13] Histories of

9 Nicole M. Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 43. Official diplomatic relations began in 1838, with the appointment of Henry A. Muhlenberg as first American minister to Vienna, followed by the establishment of an Austrian legation to the United States by Minister Wenzel Philipp Baron de Mareschal. Of relevance to the present argument, recent research has highlighted the shortcomings of histories that begin with diplomatic relations between the United States and (Habsburg) Austria. See Jonathan Singerton, "175 or 235 Years of Austro-American Relations? Reflections and Repercussions for the Modern Day," in *Austria and America:—20th-Century Cross-Cultural Connections*, eds. Joshua Parker and Ralph Poole (Zürich: Lit Verlag, 2017), 13–29.

10 Rudolf Agstner, "Kostproben aus der Anekdotenkiste diplomatischer Beziehungen während der ersten hundert Jahre," in *175 Jahre diplomatische Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und den USA*, ed. Felix Schneider (Vienna: Bundesminister für Landesverteidigung und Sport, 2014): 19–52 (here 21).

11 Ellinor Forster, "Mapping and Appropriating American Regions and Structures with 'Austrian Eyes': Consuls of the Habsburg Monarchy in the United States as Intermediators in the 1820s," *Storia e Regione* 30, no. 1 (2021): 55–85 (here 59).

12 Getrude Kummer, *Die Leopoldinen-Stiftung, 1829–1914: der älteste österreichische Missionsverein*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Wiener Dom-Verlag, 1966), 11.

13 "Antwort Sr. Durchlaucht des Fürsten von Metternich, Haus-Hof- und Staats-Kanzlers Sr. K.k. apostol. Majestät, April 27, 1830," *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung im Kaiserreich Österreich*

the Society generally present it as distanced from, even opposed to, the Austrian state.[14] But on his 1836–37 return visit to Vienna, the celebrated Leopoldine missionary Frederic Baraga had dinner with Metternich, while back in Michigan territory he was believed to be the cousin of Emperor Franz (Joseph).[15] More than that, relationships between the Austrian state and the Leopoldine Society were personal. Joseph Pletz, whom Johannes Thauren calls the cofounder of the Society and who delivered the opening address at its formal launch in May 1829, would soon be promoted to court priest in Vienna, confessor to Emperor Ferdinand, and serve as religious instructor to the future emperor Franz Joseph and his brothers.[16] Whether the Catholic church acted as the long arm of the Austrian state, or the Austrian state operated as the long arm of the Catholic church, the Leopoldine enterprise was deeply connected to both.

Initiatives targeting North America recall that, though Austria ultimately did not become a colonial power, it remained committed to shaping the future of colonial nations.[17] Founded concurrently with the Treaty on Commerce and Navigation, and shortly after the consular office in New York, the Leopoldine Society might be described as the religious complement to secular state diplomacy. But here religious purposes are not so easily distinguishable from the aims of diplomacy—nor from the interests of the captains of Austrian finance and trade. Indeed, the guest list of the May 1829 formal launch of the Society is composed of the men who had guided it into existence—court councilors, church leaders and the Habsburg

zur Unterstützung der katholischen Mission in Amerika, no. 1 (1831): 7.

14 Benjamin J. Blied, *Austrian Aid to American Catholics, 1830–1860* (Milwaukee, WI: pub. by author, 1944), 8–9. For a recent articulation, see Graham MacDonald, "Editor's Introduction," in *Frederic Baraga's Short History of the North American Indians* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 1-45 (here 15).

15 Ivan Čizmić and Matjaž Klemenčič, "Croatian and Slovene Missionaries as Inventors and Explorers of the American West and Midwest," in *Društvena istraživanja—Časopis za opća društvena pitanja* 11, no. 60–61 (2002): 761–83, at 768; Wm. N. Cook, "Kent County," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* 26 (1896): 134–46 (here 136). Baraga himself attended the wedding of Franz Joseph and Elisabeth in April 1854—to represent the American (Catholic) church, receiving a chalice from the emperor. Frederic Baraga, *The Diary of Bishop Frederic Baraga: First Bishop of Marquette, Michigan*, eds. Regis Walling and N. Daniel Rupp, trans. Joseph Gregorich and Paul Prud'homme (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 57n90.

16 Johannes Thauren, *Ein Gnadenstrom zur Neuen Welt und seine Quelle: Die Leopoldinen-Stiftung zur Unterstützung der Amerikanischen Missionen* (Vienna: Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1940), 30. "Joseph Pletz," in *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950* (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), 125–26.

17 Jonathan Singerton, "An Austrian Atlantic: The Habsburg Monarchy and the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," *Atlantic Studies* 20, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 673–97.

entrepreneurial elite, among them Prince Joseph Schwarzenberg, the founder of the first Austrian joint-stock bank, the estate owner and mine speculator Joseph von Penkler, and the silk ribbon factory and flax mill owner Thaddäus Edler von Berger.[18] Administratively, as well, the prerogatives of commerce were visibly represented. Thaddäus Berger served in the directorate, as did Georg Schwarz, the American consul, leather merchant, and Imperial and Royal Court Master Furrier, while in 1833, the business tycoon Johann Christian Bruchmann, director of the Austrian National Bank and perhaps the wealthiest private individual in Vienna, became the Society's treasurer. Modeled upon the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a French missionary society established in Lyon 1822 by Marie-Pauline Jaricot, the daughter of a local silk magnate and other silk factory owners, the Leopoldine Society expressed the interests of its stakeholders.[19]

At the outset, the Leopoldine Society fused an Old World zeal for converting Indigenous peoples with modern Austrian state ambitions in geopolitics, commerce, and knowledge transfer. This chapter concerns the place of the Leopoldine Society circle in those ambitions. But it also concerns the Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region, who had centuries-long experience with European geopolitics and who, themselves agents of commerce, traded artifacts collected by the members of Leopoldine Society circle. In the next section, I briefly characterize the North American artifacts in the Weltmuseum collection before turning to the geopolitics of the Great Lakes region where that collection was acquired. In section three, I situate the artifacts obtained by the Leopoldine Society circle within the larger framework of exchange modalities among Indigenous peoples. To convey this framework, I present the circumstances surrounding Indigenous artifact collections of British officers who were active in the region, as well as the document gift-giving of the Odawa leader Jean-Baptiste Assiginack. In section four, I call attention once again to Georg Schwarz, whose inventory of Indigenous artifacts remains the centerpiece of the North American collection in Vienna. In Schwarz, the issues of this chapter converge—the bold Habsburg turn to North America, the Leopoldine Society, and the complex overlays among the ambitions of Austrian traders, practices of Indigenous exchange, and the contemporary Weltmuseum collection. Today, the Indigenous artifacts

18 Economic history of this period remains under-researched, but on Schwarzenberg see Herman Freudenberger, "The Schwarzenberg Bank: A Forgotten Contributor to Austrian Economic Development, 1788–1830," *Austrian History Yearbook* 27 (January 1996): 41–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237800005816. The (partial) guest list is reproduced in Thauren, *Ein Gnadenstrom*, 70.

19 John F. Laffey, "Roots of French Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Lyon," *French Historical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1969): 78–92.

held in Vienna represent an essential contribution to an understanding of the material relationship between Austria and North America in the nineteenth century. But what can such artifacts still tell us about the Great Lakes region of the 1820s and 1830s? And what might Indigenous histories still have to say about the Habsburg Austria of those decades?

Anishinaabe Trading, The Leopoldine Society Circle, and the Schwarz Collection

Many artifacts located in the North American collection at the Weltmuseum in Vienna, as well as in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana, may be traced to priests, officers, and other figures active in the early years of the Leopoldine Society. Older scholarship, particularly by Christian Feest and Sylvia Kasprycki, has greatly clarified the pedigree and ethnographic context of these artifacts, while the 2019 publication of *Around Lake Michigan: American Indians 1820–1850*, provides a contemporary reassessment of the collection.[20] That volume, coedited by Gerard van Bussel and Eric Hemenway—curator of the North American collection at the Weltmuseum and archive director of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, respectively—brings forward the aforementioned Georg Schwarz as the catalyst in mobilizing Leopoldine Society missionaries to acquire Indigenous artifacts.[21] The objects assembled by Schwarz, together with those collected by the Bavarian religious painter and restorer Martin Pitzer, today form the focal point of the Weltmuseum collection.

The Schwarz collection, it might fairly be said, is surrounded by an absence of controversy. The roughly ninety specimens of North American origin in the museum inventory are well-documented. They are known, for example, to have been acquired by Schwarz between 1820 and 1867—the date of his travel to the United States and the year of his death, respectively—while careful study of the artifacts has made them a reference point for comparative stylistic analyses.[22] That is, the objects—birch bark

20 Gerard W. van Bussel and Eric Hemenway, eds., *Around Lake Michigan: American Indians, 1820–1850* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2021).

21 Exchanges and lending arrangements between Vienna and the Little Traverse Bay Bands at Harbor Springs began in the 1980s under the museum leadership of Christian Feest. See *Beadwork & Textiles of the Ottawa,* ed. Harbor Springs Historical Commission (Harbor Springs, MI: Harbor Springs Historical Commission, 1984).

22 For an overview of the Schwarz collection, especially its history once in Austria, see Sylvia S. Kasprycki, "A Devout Collector: Johann Georg Schwarz and Early Nineteenth-Century Menominee

boxes, leggings, moccasins, pouches, war clubs, and other items—are not the spoils of what were, especially in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, described as scientific expeditions or research trips to collect botanical, zoological, and ethnographic objects.[23] Neither is this collection tied to the later nineteenth-century scramble for ethnographic artifacts, especially on the Northwest coast, fueled by European and North American museums and their agents.[24] Nor are human remains or exceptional claims for repatriation tied to the Schwarz North American collection, or indeed to any of the Leopoldine missionaries.[25] Such claims, to be sure, have been made against the Weltmuseum, most notably, perhaps, in connection with the Māori skulls, mandibles, and other remains collected by the Austrian adventurer and taxidermist Andreas Reischek.[26] But these are unrelated to the North American collection.

Of course, to characterize the collection as surrounded by an absence of controversy points to the broader question raised by that characterization. Namely, what social, historical, and other circumstances are presupposed by the acquisition of this collection? Or, to put it differently, what circumstances made it possible for the Leopoldine Society circle to come into possession of the great number of artifacts that remain today? And in what ways would the Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous groups of the Great Lakes region

Art," in *Three Centuries of Woodlands Indian Art. A Collection of Essays.*, ed. J. C. H. King and Christian F. Feest (Altenstadt: ZKF Publishers, 2007), 113–22. For provenance research in the North American museum collection by its now-retired director, see Christian Feest, "Historical Collections Research. Some Experiences from the Past Decades," in *Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte*, eds. Larissa Förster et al. (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2018), 123–32, https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/19769. Feest recalls how, in the 1960s, the "two important missionary collections (Schwarz and Pitzer) from the Great Lakes region," together with the James Cook collection from the Pacific Northwest were a "tabula rasa." Feest, "Historical Collections," 124.

23 Christa Riedl-Dorn, "Forschungsreisen im Geist des Eurozentrismus. Erwerbungen für das Naturhistorische Museum Wien im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Das Museum im kolonialen Kontext: Annäherungen aus Österreich*, ed. Pia Schölnberger (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2021), 199–229.

24 Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985).

25 Cressida Fforde, Timothy McKeown, and Honor Keeler, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation: Return, Reconcile, Renew* (London: Routledge, 2020).

26 In 2013, the New Zealand Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program requested from the Weltmuseum the return of a *toi moko*, or shrunken skull, collected by Schwarz, which was subsequently returned. Coralie O'Hara, "The Andreas Reischek Collection in Vienna and New Zealand's Attempts at Repatriation," in *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation* (London: Routledge, 2022), 438–51 (here 48). For more on Reischek, see Erich Kolig, "Umstrittene Würde. Andreas Reischek, Der Neuseeland-Forscher aus dem oberösterreichischen Mühlviertel (1845–1902)," *Wiener Ethnohistorische Blätter* 41 (1996).

have seen the Leopoldine circle as recipients? In response to such questions, it is often suggested that the missionaries were—like other European visitors—simply ethnographically curious and thus eager to acquire Indigenous objects. And indeed, from the outset, Leopoldine priests expressed an interest in these objects and envisioned a repository for their collection. Already in January 1830, for example, General Vicar Friedrich Rese of the Cincinnati Diocese informed Society benefactor Joseph von Penkler that he had assembled "a lot of antiquities and other Indian objects." Such objects, he added, would be sent to Vienna when he possessed a "more complete collection" in order to "create a museum for the Leopoldine Society." Apparently, these could be easily acquired. Rese wished to know from Penkler what type of objects would be best-suited for this "Indian museum."[27]

In his letter to Penkler, Rese sought advice as to the type of objects desired in Vienna. But this request, which is also an offer, calls for contextualization. That is, what is the background to this certainty that whatever objects needed can be acquired? One explanation is that Rese implies that the local wilderness and accompanying backward condition of the nearby Indigenous peoples is such that modern market-oriented and profit-driven motives of exchange do not obtain. This explanation is, at least partially, invoked by the authors of the recent Weltmuseum publication, which cites a description from the *Detroit Free Press* around 1830 to represent the Great Lakes region as "a wilderness in the possession of Indians and wild animals," adding, in their own voice, that "By general consensus, the forests of the region's interior were, for the most part, held to be impenetrable—at least to European Americans."[28]

In fact, similar passages may be found across early Leopoldine reports from North America, as missionaries described a boundless territory without history, inhabited by savages. Thus, in January 1830, Friedrich Rese expresses his hopes of establishing a "collegium for the education of young Indians, which would serve for the conversion of their brothers in the forest."[29] To these brothers in the forest and the collegium, Rese returns again in his 1832 letter to Vienna—and this example must stand for many others—writing of "the savages who have been taken in the lap of our church … I cannot repeat it enough that savage humans could be brought to such an excellent

27 "Letter from Friedrich Rese to Joseph von Penkler, January 20, 1830," in Joseph Pletz, "Die Leopoldinen-Stiftung, Sammt Briefen aus der Mission," *Neue Theologische Zeitschrift* 2, no. 3 (1830): 319–36, at 336.

28 Van Bussel and Hemenway, *Around Lake Michigan: American Indians, 1820–1850*, 42.

29 Friedrich Rese, "Excerpts from Letters from Friedrich Rese to the Central Direction of the Leopoldine Society in Vienna," *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, no. 1 (1831): 11–14 (here 13).

piety."[30] Awakened to missionary service, in part, by the lively descriptions of Rese, Fredric Baraga also shared the vision of a primeval wilderness. In his 1831 report, completed while assigned to Waganakising (near contemporary Harbor Springs) on the northeast coast of Lake Michigan, Baraga explains that he now finds himself "smack in the middle of the savages, of whom many are converted, but still more are in the original condition of their savagery."[31] A gifted writer, Baraga was greatly drawn to the idea of "original conditions." Reflecting upon his success in 1832, he writes that "if one day everything is converted, I will, with the consent of my bishop, go to another missionary post … where no missionary has ever been … far away from here in the north."[32]

Such passages capture the experiences of Leopoldine missionaries. But a more historically grounded contextualization for Rese's offer to acquire "Indian objects" for a planned Society museum is that these objects could be easily obtained through exchange. After all, in the Great Lakes region, early Leopoldine missionaries placed themselves among the Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous groups in whom trade practices were highly evolved and for whom neither Europeans nor missionaries were a novelty. Indeed, the Anishinaabeg had encountered the French explorer Samuel Champlain more than two centuries previously, in 1615, at the mouth of the French River in present-day Ontario. Through extended contact, moreover, these groups had developed situationally elastic practices, including trade behaviors and changing religious affiliation, in response to various circumstances.[33] Indeed, Baraga himself entered into just this long and tangled history, when he brought missionary Catholicism to Waganakising in 1831. Upon arrival, he was met by Jean-Baptiste Assiginack, who would instruct him in Odawa and serve as his interpreter. Among the many Odawa already converted to Catholicism, Assiginack had learned in 1827 of the mission planned for Waganakising and left his quarters at Drummond Island to join it. Disappointed to find no priest in residence, Assiginack began to

30 Friedrich Rese, "Untitled," *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, no. 3 (1832): 1–21 (here 6).

31 Frederic Baraga, "Letter from Frederic Baraga to His Sister, Amalia Gressel, March 19, 1831," *Berichte der Leopoldinenstiftung*, no. 3 (1832): 30–33 (here 32).

32 "Zweites Schreiben des Hrn. Baraga an die Stiftungs—Direktion," *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, no. 4 (1832): 13–16 (here 14).

33 On religious affiliation, see Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and Its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1983); Tracy Neal Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) especially 59–90.

preach and teach the catechism—three years before Baraga landed in North America.[34]

Around the Great Lakes, where French and British imperial ambitions first clashed, then collided with an increasingly assertive United States where furs, weapons, cloth, and other goods circulated, trade and trade networks were the region's shared lifeblood. Of these rivalries and trade networks, Arthur Ray has noted how Indigenous complaints regarding the quality of trade goods they received increased during periods of elevated tension between the British and the French, while falling at other times.[35] Already in 1785, Frederick Eugen de Beelen-Bertholf, the first official representative of the Habsburg monarchy to the United States, met with Oneyoteaka (Oneida) Nation leaders to seek a direct trade deal with the Oneyoteaka to import furs, via Trieste, to Austria. Though Beelen reached no agreement, Jonathan Singerton has described the reports Beelen sent to Vienna, in which he linked emerging political alliances among Indigenous groups to future trade possibilities.[36] From this perspective, if Austrian elites of the 1820s had set their sights on North America intending to improve both their geopolitical outlook and their trade ledger, it must be said that early Leopoldine missionaries encountered Indigenous leaders whose experience in geopolitics and trade rivalled the Habsburgs. Looking back, after all, it was the regional power the Haudenosaunee (Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy) that drew upon its own diplomatic customs to negotiate the Treaty of Montreal in 1701, running a middle course between French and the English.[37]

In the decades that followed, new political alliances were formed, shattered, and reestablished with gift giving, exchange of goods, and trade preferences cementing these alliances. During the Seven Years War (1756–63), the Anishinaabe had sided with the French against the English,

34 Andrew J. Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* (Ypsilanti, MI: Ypsilanti Job Printing House, 1887) 47; Theodore J. Karamanski, *Blackbird's Song: Andrew J. Blackbird and the Odaawaa People* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 51.

35 Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in *Old Trails and New Directions* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1980), 255–71 (here 266).

36 Jonathan Singerton, *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy, The Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 177-78.

37 Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 122. On Haudensaunee diplomacy, see Timothy Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York, NY: Viking, 2008). For a study of Anishinaabe diplomacy, Alan Ojiig Corbiere, "Anishinaabe Treaty-Making in the 18th and 19th Century Northern Great Lakes: From Shared Meanings to Epistemological Chasms" (PhD diss., York University, 2019).

then turned in the War of 1812 to side with the English against the Americans. The Seven Years War would be called the first global war, and conflicts in this region were multilateral. Nor were Catholic clergy always viewed as neutral bystanders in these conflicts. The French Sulpician priest Gabriel Richard, whom Friedrich Rese met on his 1830 tour, had been imprisoned by the British during the War of 1812.[38] The Haudenosaunee divided the outside world into two groups: those with whom they traded and those with whom they fought.[39] And when early Leopoldine missionaries arrived, traditions that affirmed political and personal loyalty via the presentation of objects were far from ancient history. To recognize their continuing bonds, the British annually distributed gifts each year to their former Indigenous allies at Drummond Island, with as many as 4,500 travelers making the journey annually.[40] Though Great Britain ceded the island to the United States in 1828, this ritual persisted into the 1840s.[41] Indeed, the 1831 Leopoldine Society report notes that when Rese arrived at Mackinac Island, not far from Waganakising, the Milanese priest Samuel Mazzuchelli had established a mission among Othâkîwa (Sauk) and Meskwaki (Fox) groups, coincided with the preparation of many there to make their annual trek to receive gifts from the British.[42]

Exchange Modalities in the Great Lakes Region

The Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous peoples knew much more about the newly-arrived Catholic priests—Franz Xaver Hätscher, Simon Sänderl, Theodoor J. van den Broek, and others—than these priests knew about them.[43] Under the patronage of Emperor Franz and Prince Metternich, Leopoldine missionaries brought with them an understanding of Indigenous peoples. This understanding was drawn from many sources, including popular discourse, church teachings, and the Leopoldine Society's own

38 "Diocesan-Bericht aus Cincinnati de dato 11. Februar 1831," *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, no. 2 (1831): 1–10, here 7. Chrysostom Verwyst, *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga* (Milwaukee, WI: M. H. Wiltzius, 1900), 54.

39 Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier*, 22.

40 Karamanski, *Blackbird's Song*, 26.

41 Samuel F. Cook, *Drummond Island: The Story of British Occupation 1815–1828* (Lansing, MI: Robert Smith Printing, 1896), 121.

42 "Diocesan-Bericht aus Cincinnati de dato 11. Februar 1831," 4.

43 Early priests were generally assigned to their posts by Cincinnati Bishop Edward Fenwick. See Sylvia S. Kasprycki, *Die Dinge des Glaubens: Menominees und Missionare im kulturellen Dialog, 1830–1880*, vol. 23 (Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2006): 32–38.

reports, to name a few. But what a contemporary assessment of early Leopoldine missionaries, together with their collecting activities in the Great Lakes region, would do well to confront is that for cultural artifacts to circulate, no shared agreement concerning the meaning of that circulation is required. Indeed, today, it is difficult to conjure the labyrinthine world of circulating currencies, commodities, and other trade objects encountered by these early missionaries. In the United States, a place where wampum had once been legal tender, monetary multilingualism obtained. Of the $23,000,000 circulating as coin in 1830, as Marc Shell notes, $9,000,000 was in foreign coin.[44] Shaped by many factors, including regional traditions, group experiences, and local contingencies, Indigenous peoples also brought with them an understanding of gift relationships and exchange modalities.[45]

In his celebrated account of the upper Great Lakes region, the historian Richard White has introduced the term "middle ground" to characterize a particular historical space in which social actors could retain their own understanding of their interactions with other social actors.[46] As White argues, beginning in the early seventeenth century, imperial or state regimes and non-state forms of social organization in the *pays d'en haut* were engaged in a deadlock. A provisional balance of power obtained, where each actor desired something of what the other had, yet no actor could compel another to act in accordance with their wishes. In response, social actors sought cultural congruences, "either perceived or actual," that enabled them to negotiate, strike alliances, and conduct exchanges without being required to sacrifice their own self-understanding of what was taking place.[47] The "middle ground," White underscores, did not entail an accomplishment in "mutual understanding and appreciation between Europeans and Indian people," but rather represented a "creation, in part through creative misunderstanding, of a set of practices, rituals, offices, and beliefs that although comprised of elements of the group in contact is as a whole separate from the practices and beliefs of all of those groups."[48]

44 Marc Shell, *Wampum and the Origins of American Money* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 12.

45 For some considered reflections on these exchange modalities by a pioneer of their study, see "Introduction to the 1998 Edition," Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660–1870; with a New Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), xi–xxxii.

46 Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, 20th anniversary ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

47 White, *The Middle Ground*, xii.

48 White, *The Middle Ground*, xxi, xiii.

Drawing attention to the *pays d'en haut* as a middle ground recalls that missionaries were not the only members of the Leopoldine circle with an interest in acquiring Indigenous artifacts. Indeed, beginning around 1820 in the Great Lakes region, Georg Schwarz had begun collecting such artifacts during his travels to North America. Born in 1800 as the scion of a fur and leather merchant family, Schwarz would later become secretary of the Leopoldine Society. But as a young man, Schwarz was situated squarely within that Austrian generation of the 1820s, previously encountered, committed to exploring trade opportunities abroad. In Detroit sometime around 1821, with his older brother who had become a naturalized American citizen in 1817, Schwarz founded a trading company devoted to buying and selling furs and to supplying goods to the fur trade.[49] Here, it is believed, Schwarz met with Anishinaabeg, the Mamaceqtaw, and Potawatomi, among other groups, and began acquiring Indigenous artifacts.[50] Though Schwarz returned to Vienna within a few years, these objects formed the basis of his growing collection. Of the circumstances surrounding these early acquisitions, little is known, including in what ways these participated in the circulatory system of artifacts in the middle ground. The *Biographical Lexicon of the Austrian Empire* simply reports that "on his far travels he obtained the most remarkable and often highly interesting objects, which were mostly obtained at little cost, or were simply there for the taking."[51]

To be sure, the arrival of the early Leopoldine missionaries coincided with the dissolution of the multipolar standoff that had underpinned the historical space of the middle ground. The 1795 Treaty of Greenville ceded Indigenous lands, except in the northwestern corner of Ohio, to the United States and contributed to a decoupling of the British and Indigenous compact. That compact had been built on the old linkage between alliance and commerce—Indigenous peoples would only trade with allies. For Indigenous peoples, trade partners and commerce were the casus belli of the War of 1812.[52] After its victory, the United States expelled French and British trading—and thus influence—from the region, while the 1830 Indian Removal Act replaced Indigenous political independence with dependence. Still, into

49 Gerard van Bussel, "Of Collectors and Collections," in *Around Lake Michigan: American Indians, 1820–1850*, eds. Gerard W. van Bussel and Eric Hemenway (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2021), 41–56, here 44.

50 Van Bussel, "Of Collectors and Collections," 43.

51 Constant von Wurzbach, "Johann Georg Schwarz," in *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1876) 296–99, at 297.

52 Pekka Hämäläinen, *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 152.

the 1830s, old ways of conducting exchange survived, and the older habits of the middle ground persisted. In the missionary endeavor, Leopoldine priests, like other missionaries, found greater success when Indigenous peoples were in a relationship of dependency.[53] But the missionary enterprise itself is protean, as James Axtell has noted, calling for its practitioners to become all things to all people so that some might be saved. Indeed, it was this self-understanding that led Leopoldine missionaries to learn local Indigenous languages, immerse themselves into local cultures, and adopt local customs.

Alliances between Indigenous groups and other categories of social actors in the middle ground offer one reference point for thinking about exchange relationships between the Anishinaabe and the early Leopoldine missionary circle. In the second half of the eighteenth century, for example, British forces and Indigenous peoples forged partnerships, expressed through objects, to counter the increasingly assertive French and American presence in the Great Lakes region. In his memoirs, the New York-born British "chief" Arent Schuyler DePeyster recalls an occasion in 1776, upon which he received wampum belts from the Haudenosaunee accompanied by a speech, whose purpose was to invite the Ojibwe to meet at Connesedaga village.[54] As British Deputy Governor on Michilimackinac Island, DePeyster later acted as judge in the case of a local Ojibwe who confessed to being told by a spirit in the shape of a white beaver, while asleep on Beaver Island, to kill the commandant (DePeyster). As punishment, DePeyster sentenced the man to spend the winter on Beaver Island, but also to find the white beaver, kill it, and bring him the skin.[55] Today, that albino beaver pelt, together with other Indigenous artifacts preserved by DePeyster, is held in the King's Regiment Collection at National Museums Liverpool.[56]

Such were the compass of events, range of circumstances, and modalities of exchange in the middle ground. Indeed, in examining the decades following the Seven Years War (1756–63), scholars have shown how fully British soldiers were integrated into Indigenous object economies. Like DePeyster, the Anglo-Irish Lieutenant John Caldwell sustained the British and Indigenous alliance against the Americans through a military diplomacy grounded in the circulation of goods. His father summarized

53 James Axtell, "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions," *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (1982): 35–41 (here 37–39).

54 Arent Schuyler De Peyster, *Miscellanies*, ed. J. Watts De Peyster, vol. 1, 2 vols. (New York, NY: A. E. Chasmer, 1888): 4.

55 De Peyster Arent Schuyler, *Miscellanies*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (New York, NY: A. E. Chasmer, 1888).

56 Simon Jones, "Caldwell and DePeyster: Two Collectors from the King's Regiment on the Great Lakes in the 1770s and 1780s," in *Three Centuries of Woodlands Indian Art*, 32–43.

this diplomacy, writing that from 1776–80 the young Caldwell had been "principally employed in delivering the King's presents to the Indians, and exchanging with them the war hatchet and wampon [*sic*]."[57] Empowered by profession to negotiate for the loyalty of Indigenous groups, Caldwell amassed the largest surviving collection of Indigenous artifacts from the Revolutionary War years, a collection that now resides in the Canadian Museum of History. For a consideration of the Leopoldine Society circle, more specifically, the Caldwell collection indicates an alternate path to acquiring artifacts, what Ruth B. Phillips has called the "participatory paradigm," in contrast to the paradigm of acquiring Indigenous "curiosities."[58] Thus, in the exercise of his profession, Caldwell himself utilized many of the artifacts that have been preserved—a feathered headdress, a calico shirt, brooches, moccasins, leggings, and a belt pouch, among others. A portrait of the lieutenant, adorned with many of these objects, offers testimony to their use, as do other signs, including indications of habitual wear. Caldwell was tasked to preserve British alliances with linguistically and culturally diverse nations in the unstable Ohio Valley, and Phillips suggests his grasp of "aboriginal metaphorical language and protocol" contributed to the success he achieved.[59] Moments of participatory acquisition, such as a holy water container of birchbark and perhaps the leggings worn by Georg Schwarz or the *Arbre Croche Sketchbook*, might be identified among the items preserved by the Leopoldine circle, though such moments remain in need of additional exploration.[60]

According to its people, the name Odawa derives from an Anishinaabe word meaning "trading, selling, or doing business."[61] The early Leopoldine circle, in obtaining Indigenous artifacts, may be said to have learned to trade from the Anishinaabeg. Objects, as DePeyster and Caldwell understood, were

57 Cited in Jones, "Caldwell and DePeyster," 41.

58 Ruth B. Phillips, "Reading and Writing between the Lines: Soldiers, Curiosities, and Indigenous Art Histories," *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 2/3 (June 2011): 107–24, here 123. Following the naming convention that ascribes intent to the European receiver of an object from an Indigenous person, the rubric "collector" is most often applied to DePeyster and Caldwell. But, of course, what is known is that the objects were obtained and subsequently preserved.

59 Phillips, "Reading and Writing between the Lines," 116.

60 For a slightly different perspective on the holy water container, consult Sylvia S. Kasprycki, "The Native American Collection of Frederik Baraga: The Missionary as Ethnographic Collector," *Ethnolog* 8, no. 59 (1998): 331–55. On the Sketchbook, see Christian F. Feest, "The 'Arbre Croche Sketchbook,'" in *Beadwork & Textiles of the Ottawa*, 61–83.

61 Frank Ettawageshik, "My Father's Business," in *Unpacking Culture. Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, eds. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999): 20–29 (here 21).

the traditional currency among allies. But loyalties, homage, and a multitude of other personal bonds between individuals were also expressed through objects. It seems unlikely, for example, the Leopoldine priest Frederic Baraga did not exchange gifts with Jean-Baptiste Assiginack, the Odawa leader who served as his interpreter and taught him Odawa at Waganakising, though there is no record of what these might have been. But a gift made by Assiginack, who fought on the British side in the War of 1812, given to a British friend around 1820, has survived and resides in the Canadian Museum of History.[62] A miniature canoe, thirty-seven inches in length, the boat is occupied by a war party composed of six (originally seven) chiefs and warriors. Assiginack wished to memorialize a historical event, probably a war party departing from Waganakising in 1815, as the identity of each figure can be corroborated by period sources.[63] Richly detailed, the tattoos, hair, and painted faces of the figures suggest active warriors, and the side of the canoe depict two spirits (*manidoog*), an Underwater Panther and a Thunderbird.[64] As what messages this gift of Assiginack conveys, like other such exchanges, little can be said with certainty. The British had made large promises to their Anishinaabe allies, but the British had lost the war. Gifts could call due past commitments, take stock of the present, express wishes for the future, and a great deal else.

Trade Missions and Trading Secrets: Georg Schwarz

The gift of a canoe by Assiginack highlights the connection between Indigenous artifacts held in contemporary museum collections and the scrambled dynamics of the exchange economy in the Great Lakes region. But it also suggests how fully practices of Indigenous exchange were integrated in global networks of missionary activity, trade, and statecraft. Born in 1768, the canoe-giver Assiginack would fight in seven battles with the British, and serve as chief interpreter for the Indian Department in the Manitoulin Island region, presenting a sizable band of Anishinaabe dressed in full

62 Cecil King notes that Assiginack and his wife, Theresa Kebeshkamokwe, worked together carving canoes. Cecil King, *Balancing Two Worlds: Jean-Baptiste Assiginack and the Odaawaa Nation, 1768–1866* (Saskatoon: Dr. Cecil King, 2013), 183.

63 J. Gareth Taylor, "Assiginack's Canoe. Memories of Indian Warfare on the Great Lakes," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* 66, no. 5 (1988): 49–53.

64 Michelle K. Cassidy, "'Both the Honor and the Profit': Anishinaabe Warriors, Soldiers, and Veterans from Pontiac's War through the Civil War" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2016), 57.

regalia to Bishop Edward Fenwick upon his visit to Waganakising in 1829, before teaching Odawa to Baraga there two years later.[65] Assiginack would subsequently acquire the status of an Indigenous senior statesman (*ogimaa*), leading negotiations for the 1836 Manitoulin Treaty, and the 1850 Robinson Huron Treaty, and the 1862 McDougall Treaty, before his death in 1866 at Manitoulin Island.[66]

The Austrian entrepreneur and collector Georg Schwarz might well have met Jean-Baptiste Assiginack through the provisions company in Detroit he had established with his brother in 1821. Gerard van Bussel notes that, for fur traders, contacts with "Indian chiefs" were essential, and that "Schwarz met the Odawa, Ojibwe, Menominee, Potawatomi and other tribes."[67] Whatever the case, the North American trip of Schwarz represents an unmistakable foreshadowing of the Austrian state and Leopoldine missionary ventures that would follow a decade later. Upon his arrival in Detroit, for example, Schwarz lodged with the local tycoon Joseph Campau, and it was his brother, Louis Campau, who would host Frederic Baraga in Grand River (Grand Rapids), while Baraga founded his mission there in 1833.[68]

Indeed, in Detroit, Schwarz established relationships that looked ahead to opportunities for future cooperation. He struck a friendship, for example, with Lewis Cass, Governor of Michigan territory, the authorized US representative for trade negotiations with the Odawa and Ojibwe in 1820, who would soon become the American ambassador to France. Such relationships pointed beyond Detroit, to New York, where the Campau family traded through commission houses, and still further, to France and Europe. But these relationships were largely among mercantile elites, aggressive capitalists, with skills cut to fit the singular demands of the region. Having relocated from Montreal, for example, the Campau family had acquired a vast fortune, first through the fur trade, and then by investing their gains in urban real estate. Like Louis Campau, Joseph Campau could

65 Alan Ojiig Corbiere, "Jean Baptiste Assiginack: The Starling Aka Blackbird," Active History, n.d., https://activehistory.ca/blog/2014/11/12/jean-baptiste-assiginack-the-starling-aka-blackbird/#2, accessed 24 April 2024; King, *Balancing Two Worlds*, 157–187; Frank A. O'Brien, "The Diocese of Detroit. What It Was. What It Is," in *Report of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan*, vol. 9 (Lansing, MI: State Printers, 1908), 128–37 (here 133); Karamanski, *Blackbird's Song*, 51.

66 The role of the Odawa *ogimaa* is described as "helping his band members reach consensus decisions, and for carrying out the wishes of his band members within the band and through the interactions of band members with others outside of the community." James McClurken, *Our People, Our Journey: The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2009), 15.

67 Van Bussel, "Of Collectors and Collections," 43.

68 MacDonald, "Editor's Introduction," 18.

Figure 8.1 Jean-Baptiste Assiginack (1768–1866)

Figure 8.2 Johann Georg Schwarz (1800–67)

speak several Indigenous languages. After all, one did not become the wealthiest man in the Michigan territory without knowing how to negotiate in local languages. But that wealth also came by negotiating treaties that led to "loss of Indian land and substantial profit for the traders," and it is said that Louis Campau—who had hosted Baraga and may have given Schwarz an Iroquois ball-headed club now in the Weltmuseum—earned $100,000 by closing a treaty in 1836.[69] In Detroit, Schwarz secured a foothold in North America for the Leopoldine missionaries, for the trade ambitions of Habsburg Austria, and—it must be said—for himself, the Indigenous artifact dealer and collector. To the Great Lakes region, others would follow.

The patriarchs of the Campau family were, in effect, entrepreneurial analogues to DePeyster and Caldwell in a now vanishing middle ground. Unlike Lewis Cass, they were widely seen as friends to local Indigenous groups, and their adoption of certain Native practices surely enhanced their positions as negotiators. But in some ways, Georg Schwarz also auditioned for such a role—albeit from Vienna. With neither his memoirs nor a travel account preserved, it may be in his 1828 lithographic portrait by

69 Jay Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier: French Towns, French Traders, and American Expansion* (Yale University Press, 2017), 78, 141. On the means by which traders could profit from serving as intermediaries in treaty negotiations, also see Gitlin, 67. On the Grand River Iroquois ball-headed club, see Kasprycki, "A Devout Collector," 14.

Josef Kriehuber that Schwarz expresses most directly his adoption of North American Indigeneity (Figure 8.2). Here, centered in the foreground, facing the observer, the still young Schwarz offers himself as a man of global trade. The wide ocean and, one supposes, the distant lands beyond it, occupy the background. A different portrait, one believed to represent Jean-Baptiste Assiginack (Figure 8.1), references the dual claims of the Odawa leader, who displays both the septum piercing of an Odawa leader and the cross of a Christian.[70] Partly obscured by the right arm of the Viennese global trader is Schwarz's own claim to Indigeneity—a feather-decorated pipestem and an otter skin fur cap ornamented with feather. To be sure, something of the nineteenth-century collector might be detected in the Schwarz portrait, though also, surely, in that of the Latin cross collector Assiginack. Schwarz himself would use his position as secretary of the Leopoldine Society to acquire Indigenous artifacts, which have eventually become part of the Weltmuseum collection.[71] But he would also continue to express broader identifications with the United States, particularly in the area of commercial exchange. Indeed, in January 1829, President Andrew Jackson nominated Schwarz to serve as the American consul in Vienna, and he was officially recognized as such by the Habsburg government in November 1830. His primary task was to promote trade on behalf of the United States in Austria.

Traditions of Indigenous exchange taught Europeans in the Great Lakes region that exchange renewed and reaffirmed relationships, binding together those who participated. Relationships sustained in this way, scholars have argued, were the antithesis of the relationship proposed by the European treaty and its claim to permanently fix relationships in writing.[72] Exchange among Indigenous allies needed to be repeated because relationships were understood to be impermanent. Such an understanding also recognized that personal loyalties and individual reputations were subject to revision. With his public speech in favor of the 1862 McDougall Treaty, which would open Manitoulin Island for non-Indigenous settlers, Assiginack became an outcast

70 Anishinaabeg historians now consider the portrait figure to be Assiginack, rather an earlier identification, even as some uncertainty persists. See Bimadoshka Pucan, "The Anishinaabeg of Chief's Point" (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2019), 106.

71 Carlo Krieger, "Christian Kauder, ein Luxemburger Missionar bei den Micmac-Indianern in Kanada," in *Le Luxembourg et l'étranger: présences et contacts*, eds. Jean-Claude Muller and Wilhelm Frank (Luxembourg: Association SESAM, 1987), 88–114, here 107–8. Here, I follow the conventional description of Schwarz as Society "secretary," though his position as *Comtur* might today be rendered as "chief administrative officer." Equipped with assistants, though his own position was honorary, Schwarz signed bills, made payments, did accounts, and maintained an overview of the organization.

72 John Borrows, "Negotiating Treaties and Land Claims: The Impact of Diversity within First Nations Property Interests," *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice* 12 (1992): 179–234 (here 191–92).

among his people. A younger Odawa chief, one among many chiefs who refused to sign the Treaty, declared that Assiginack was not a pure Odawa, but one whose ancestor had been adopted into the nation, and a "slave."[73] In the Mann Affair of 1849, the American Consul Georg Schwarz likewise forfeited something of his reputation and self-image. But here, in matters of wealth, proximity to political power, and statecraft, the parallels end. In 1862, Assiginack was ninety-six years old, and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs William McDougall simply excluded those leaders who would not negotiate. In 1849, by contrast, Georg Schwarz was a prosperous Viennese merchant, director of a fur and leather goods business in the *Schönlaterngasse*, who would be lavishly decorated by church and state in the coming years. Still, the Mann Affair represents the first of only two meaningful breakdowns in the relationship between the post-1776 United States and the Habsburg monarchy before the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy.[74] More importantly, with its ruinous consequences, the Mann Affair recenters for the current discussion the combustible mixture of geopolitics, trade, and shifting alliances that not only characterized the Great Lakes region, but led Habsburg Austria and the Leopoldine Society to North America in the first place.

An Austrian citizen with close ties to the Catholic church and the Habsburg government, the title of American Consul meant that Georg Schwarz had been appointed an agent of the United States. Because consular duties primarily concerned matters of commerce, Schwarz had little to do with diplomatic and political affairs. But in the stalemate that followed the 1848 Hungarian uprising against the Austrian imperial government, Lajos Kossuth asked William Henry Stiles, the American Chargé d'affaires in Vienna, to inform the imperial government, on behalf of the Kingdom of Hungary, that Hungary remained open to negotiation. When Habsburg leaders rejected the Hungarian overture, the American administration of Zachary Taylor decided to open its own negotiations with Hungary. In June 1849, Secretary of State Clayton instructed Paris-based diplomat Ambrose Dudley Mann to travel to Hungary, via Vienna, in order to ascertain the status of revolutionary movement and to assess the chances of forming commercial arrangements with an independent Hungary favorable to the United States. Such was the

73 Alan Ojiig Corbiere, "Jean Baptiste Assiginack: The Starling Aka Blackbird," Active History, n.d., https://activehistory.ca/blog/2014/11/12/jean-baptiste-assiginack-the-starling-aka-blackbird/#2, accessed, 24 April 2024.

74 The second crisis, according to T. Mills Kelly, occurred in 1885, when the Austrian government refused to accept Anthony M. Keiley as Minister to Austria because his wife was Jewish, and a virtual break in relations ensued. T. Mills Kelly, "America's First Attempt at Intervention in East Central Europe," *East European Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1995): 1–17 (here 15).

resolve behind this mission that in the possession of Mann was a letter, signed by Taylor, authorizing him to "agree, treat, consult and negotiate of and concerning all matters and subjects interesting to both nations, and to conclude and sign a treaty or treaties, convention or conventions."[75]

When Mann arrived in Vienna, William Stiles had departed on a family trip through Switzerland to Paris. In his absence, Consul Schwarz had taken charge of the American legation. Stiles recalled in his memoirs that he had always exercised caution around Schwarz. To be sure, he could hardly have written otherwise, as once in Vienna, Mann entrusted the documents to Schwarz, who promptly read them and shared their content with Austrian Minister President Felix Schwarzenberg.[76] As a high bourgeois tradesman and entrepreneur in the Great Lakes region of the early 1820s, Schwarz had fused his own commercial pursuits with Habsburg foreign policy. In late 1840s Vienna, trade interests and global politics reconverged. For his part, Georg Schwarz collected both Indigenous artifacts and political intelligence. But where the Leopoldine Society is concerned, as I have argued, these two practices are never far apart. With his role in the Mann Affair exposed, the career of Consul Schwarz ended. In April 1853, the American government appointed George Lippett as his replacement in Vienna, also replacing consuls in Trieste and Venice with American citizens. Thereafter, in 1855, with reference to the Schwarz espionage incident, the US Congress passed a law henceforth prohibiting foreign nationals from serving as American consuls abroad.

Conclusion

Missionary activity, as historical anthropologists have observed, has its own history and is not constant across time.[77] Founded by Habsburg and Catholic leaders, the early Leopoldine Society acquired shape during a

75 Cited in Kelly, "America's First Attempt," 3.

76 Ambrose Dudley Mann to Secretary of State, John Clayton, No. 13, Paris, 8 October 1849. *Despatches from Special Agents of the Department of State, 1794–1906*, Microfilm 7, National Archives, Record Group 59. On Schwarz as an "Austrian police informer," also see Sándor Szilassy, "America and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 44, no. 102 (1966): 180–96 (here 183). The most detailed account of the Mann Mission remains Daniel Thomas Goggin, "The Mann Mission: A Study of American Diplomatic Relations with Austria, 1849–1851" (Master's thesis, American University, 1961).

77 Gerald Faschingeder, "Missionsgeschichte als Beziehungsgeschichte. Die Genese des europäischen Missionseifers als Gegenstand der historischen Anthropologie," *Historische Anthropologie* 10, no. 1 (April 2002): 1–30.

period of increased Habsburg state engagement in economic expansion, especially around global trade, together with a reinvigorated Catholic church committed to unleashing its potential through a "mobilization from below."[78] The transatlantic Catholic network to be built by the Society would thus not only extend the global reach of the monarchy and herald a new age of economic opportunity. It would strengthen the church as well.[79] Or, as Friedrich Rese, a founding figure of the Society, put the anticipated outcome of the endeavor, the "unification of the spirit and the prayer between the Catholics of the Austrian monarchy and those of America brought about by the Leopoldine Society will bring down the lavish blessings of God upon us."[80]

From a contemporary perspective, to be sure, it seems inevitable that among the legacies of Habsburg global ambitions should be collections of Indigenous objects held by Central European museums.[81] What might be less recognized, however, is that such objects enable multiple points of access into Austrian and Indigenous histories. Today, a reconsideration of the Weltmuseum North American collection illuminates Habsburg geopolitical ambitions and accompanying trade ideals, but also deeply-rooted traditions of Indigenous exchange. In reaching across the Atlantic to secure a future for Austrian commercial enterprise, Habsburg leaders sent Leopoldine missionaries to the Great Lakes regions, where they would encounter Indigenous masters of geopolitics and some of the most skilled traders on the planet.

Indigenous artifacts held by museums stimulate the writing of narratives that offer a coherent context for these artifacts in the present. With respect to these artifacts, stories of authenticity have often held a particular grip on the imagination of ethnographers and collectors.[82] For their part, given the role of the Leopoldine Society circle in their acquisition, many of the Indigenous objects in the Weltmuseum have been plotted within a story about the Indigenous adoption of Christianity. As Sylvia Kasprycki has suggested, for example, prayer mats with Indigenous symbols were incorporated into churches, such that Christian sites of worship became an Indigenous

78 Siegfried Weichlein, "The Missionary Movement and the Catholic Revival in Germany before 1848," in *Religiöse Grenzziehungen im öffentlichen Raum—Mechanismen und Strategien von Inklusion und Exklusion im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011), 263–76 (here 268–69).

79 Leopoldine Society histories generally call attention to the endangered position of Catholics in the United States as an impetus for its launch and activities. See Kummer, 131–32; Thauren, 22.

80 Friedrich Rese, "Excerpts from Letters," 14.

81 Joy Slappnig and Claudia Augustat, "A Colonial Thing. Booklet" (Weltmuseum Wien, s.d.).

82 Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press,1998) 49–71.

place.[83] But I say that inscribed in these artifacts is also the history of the relationship between Habsburg Austria and North America, and very notably, the histories of Indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes region. In retrospect, the encounter between the Leopoldine circle and Indigenous peoples that resulted in the possession of so many Indigenous objects by Austrian missionaries existed only briefly. Perhaps the significance of gift-giving and object exchange—for Indigenous peoples no less than Leopoldine priests—receded with the middle ground. In 1835, after just five years of missionary activity, Baraga dispatched his objects to Europe where they were donated to the predecessor of the current Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana. Returned to Vienna, Georg Schwarz acquired a public persona as a collector of Indigenous artifacts; though as an enterprising broker of these artifacts, together with commercial commodities and state secrets, Schwarz seems to have carried the history, if not the lessons, of the Great Lakes region with him.

About the Author

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83 Sylvia S. Kasprycki, "The Native American Collection of Frederik Baraga: The Missionary as Ethnographic Collector," *Ethnolog* 8, no. 59 (1998): 340.