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HO-CHUNK PEOPLE IN THE STOUGHTON AREA

It is well known that Native American *people* have inhabited the area around Stoughton for many millennia with several very early sites being recorded along the Yahara River between Lake Waubesa and the city limits. When we move forward in time to the 19th century, there is more than ample documentation of a substantial Ho-Chunk presence in the Stoughton area that includes villages, garden beds, maple sugar camps, trails and cemetery areas. Details concerning accuracy, timelines, individual leaders and the meaning of these places is best addressed by Bill Quackenbush, the Ho-Chunk Nation's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO).

In the broadest sense the Stoughton area sits between three loci of concentrated Ho-Chunk activity. To the north were a series of communities around Lakes Mendota, Monona and Waubesa, while to the southeast, Lake Koshkonong was surrounded by substantial settlements such at those at Crab Apple Point and White Crow's village at Carcajou Point. In addition, the region to the southwest contained a series of villages along the Sugar River from Broadhead to New Glarus. At the later location leaders like Spotted Arm and others were engaged in extensive lead mining and smelting at the Sugar River Diggings near Exeter. The trails that connected these areas are clearly visible in the original USGLO maps of the area.

In the Stoughton area the Ho-Chunk villages and fields are recorded in various locations around Lake Kegonsa and near the trading post of Abe Rasdall. Lake Kegonsa itself is an artificial native sounding name created by later Americans. The orginal Ho-Chunk name is said to have been Hard Maple Grove Lake, a very specific label pertaining to this body of water. The name was derived from the large grove of sugar maples that once stood on the peninsula jutting into the west side of the lake. This peninsula was referred to by early settlers as Sugar Bush Point and is now called Williams Point after a prominent landowner and recreational developer. Although people often believe that the Ho-Chunk left the area after the forced removals of the early 1830's, groups of people continued to travel through and live on the landscape until the present day. The archaeological site files report several locations along the Yahara River south of

Stoughton where substantial bands of Ho-Chunk camped well into the 19th century and likely later. History aside, it is obvious that despite being largely absent from the local historical narrative, the Ho-Chunk Nation and its *people* are still very much a part of and living within the greater Four Lakes Region today.

This brief sketch is in no way exhaustive, but merely a cursory summary of some of the better known locations where Ho-Chunk people were active around Stoughton. In order to better understand the depth, complexity and meaning of Ho-Chunk history and ties to this landscape, the nation must be approached and consulted. If you have any questions concerning this information, feel free to contact me at any time.

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