





# WHAT IS THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIVES SEEN MOST OFTEN IN CHICAGO?

**Images of Native people and culture have long been used as mascots for school and professional teams.**

Following various programs of displacement from Native land, the United States government, beginning with President Grant, sought to eliminate Native Identity once and for all through forced assimilation with the creation of boarding schools. Captain Richard Henry Pratt is credited with the idea of taking Native children from their homes and putting them in boarding schools to “kill the Indian; save the man.” These schools were modeled after Fort Marion prison, where Native POWs had been interned, and “civilized” for decades. These schools remained in place until the 1970s, when most were either closed or reformed.

There is a bitter irony in the use of Native people as mascots in schools today and in the past, as the Native children in boarding schools were told to cast away their Indigenous identity.



A protestor in Minneapolis advocating for the elimination of racist mascots in the National Football League in November 2014.

Since their founding in 1926, the Chicago Blackhawks have used a Native American head as their logo. The hockey team, and its logo, are alleged to honor Chief Black Hawk of the Sauk people.

*“An Indian who is as bad as the white men could not live in our nation; he would be put to death and eaten up by the wolves.”*

– Chief Black Hawk’s surrender speech.

**Chief Black Hawk and the “Black Hawk War”**

In 1832, Chief Black Hawk led his people from Iowa, their winter territory, back to Illinois to begin their traditional planting of corn. This had been done for many generations. However, the squatter settlers saw the Sauk and called for the militia and federal troops. The Sauk, following a long winter, were ill-equipped to defend themselves. After Chief Black Hawk surrendered to save his people, the troops fired and slaughtered many of the Sauk farmers. The remaining were rounded up and sent to a reservation. This is now referred to as the “Black Hawk War” in American history.



Chief Black Hawk, Mahkatêwe-meshi-kêhkêhkwa



# MASCOTS TODAY

## Chicago Blackhawks:

In 2020, the Chicago Blackhawks reaffirmed their stance that they would change neither their logo nor their name despite pushback from Native groups and individuals, releasing a statement excerpted here:

*“The Chicago Blackhawks name and logo symbolizes this important and historic person (Black Hawk of the Sauk [present day Sac & Fox] tribe), whose leadership and life continues to inspire generations of Indigenous people, American veterans and our very own Blackhawks community.”*



A Chicago Blackhawks statue defaced by protesters calling for a decolonized Zhigaaogong (Unceded land East of Michigan Avenue).

## Response from The American Indian Center of Chicago:

For years, the American Indian Center of Chicago had a goodwill partnership with the Chicago Blackhawks. However, after the Blackhawks made their statement, those ties were broken:

*“Going forward, AIC will have no professional ties with the Blackhawks or any other organization that perpetuates harmful stereotypes.”*

## The Danger of Mascots

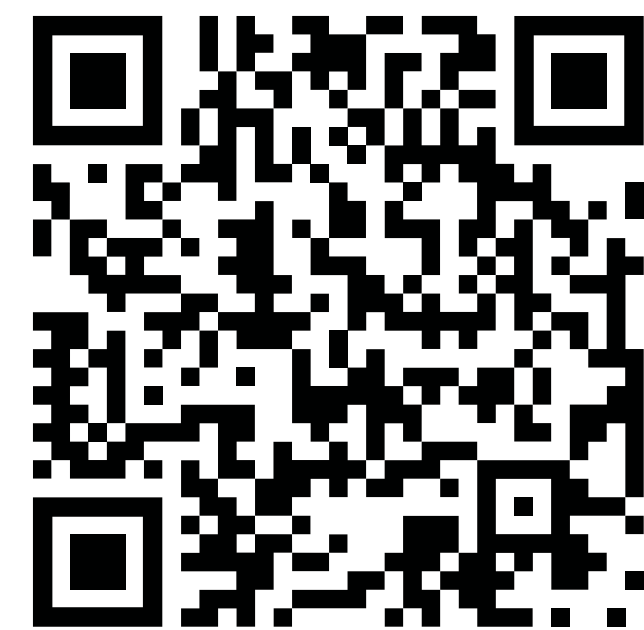
Not only are Native mascots offensive and disturbing, they also lead to adverse psychological effects with real-world dangers. According to the American Psychological Association, Native Mascots:

- **Undermine the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture, spirituality and traditions.** Many American Indians report that they find today’s typical portrayal of American Indian culture disrespectful and offensive to their spiritual beliefs.
- **Present stereotypical images of American Indians.** Such mascots are a contemporary example of prejudice by the dominant culture against racial and ethnic minority groups.
- **Are a form of discrimination against American Indian Nations that can lead to negative relations between groups.**

In Schools, Native mascots:

- **Undermine the educational experiences of members of all communities—especially those who have had little or no contact with Indigenous peoples.** The symbols, images and mascots teach non-Indian children that it’s acceptable to participate in culturally abusive behavior and perpetuate inaccurate misconceptions about American Indian culture.
- **Establish an unwelcome and oftentimes hostile learning environment for American Indian students that affirms negative images/stereotypes that are promoted in mainstream society.**

For more information about ongoing struggles to eliminate offensive mascots visit the Indian Affairs website:





# WHOSE LAND ARE YOU ON?

## A History of Displacement

Present day Chicago and the Great Lakes region have been home to Native Peoples for many generations. However, as the settler-colonialist idea of Manifest Destiny began to take hold, more and more of these Indigenous people were displaced. Following the “Black Hawk War” of 1832 and the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, any remaining Native people were forced out of the area into “Indian territory” in modern day Oklahoma.

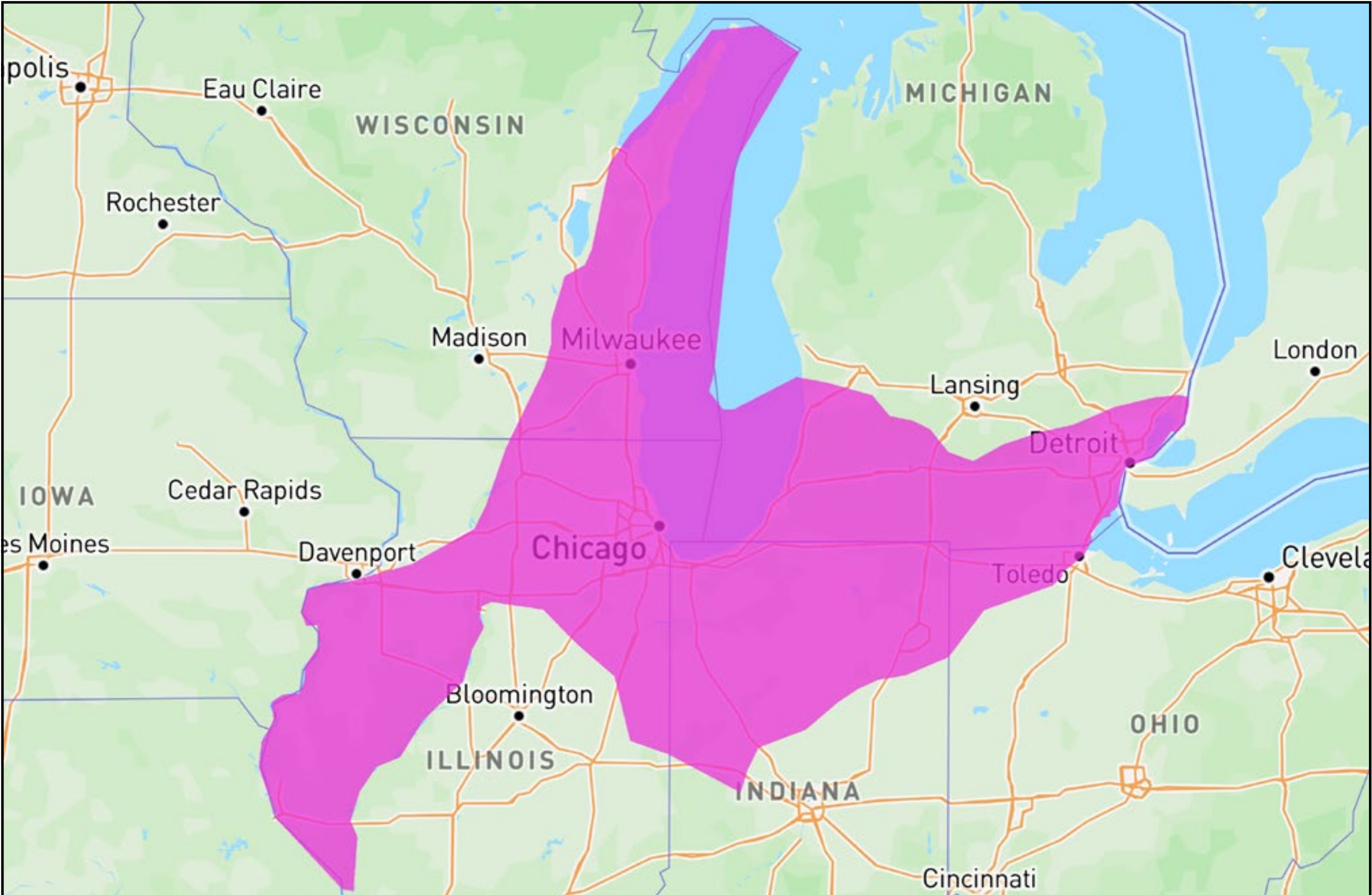
## Who Are Neshnabek, The Council of Three Fires?

The Council of Three Fires, traditionally known as the Neshnabek (“Man Sent Down from Above”), is a confederated nation comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodéwadmi. The confederacy is referred to as the Council of Three Fires, recognizing that each tribe functions as brethren to serve the alliance as a whole.

## Bodéwadmi, Potawatomi

The Citizen Potawatomi are Algonquian-speaking people who originally occupied the Great Lakes region of the United States. By the end of the 18th century, tribal villages were being displaced by white settlements, ultimately ushering in the American treaty era. Through a series of treaties, beginning in 1789, their tribal estate totaling more than 89 million acres was gradually reduced. The federal government continued reducing Potawatomi landholdings by displacing them to smaller reserves in Iowa, Missouri and finally Kansas in 1846.

Today, Citizen Potawatomi Nation is one of 38 federally recognized Native American tribes with headquarters in Oklahoma. CPN is a thriving nation that is actively working to retain its culture while being a frontrunner in Native American commerce.



## Anishinaabeg, Ojibwe

The Ojibwe are an Algonquian-speaking tribe and constitute the largest Native American group north of Mexico. In 1854, the Ojibwe signed a treaty that created four of the modern-day Ojibwe reservations in Wisconsin: Bad River, Red Cliff, Lac du Flambeau and Lac Courte Oreilles.

Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887, designed to help Native people live more like whites by dividing up reservation lands so they could all own individual farms. The land in northern Wisconsin was not good for farming, and many Ojibwe sold their land to lumber companies to supplement their wages. On some reservations, over 90% of the land passed into White hands.

## Nishnaabe, Odawa

The areas we now call Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin are the ancestral homelands of the Odawa (also spelled Ottawa and Odaawa), who were mostly traders. Under pressure from the United States government, the Odawa people signed treaties between 1795 and 1817, ceding much of their land. After the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Odawa people were moved to reservations in Kansas and Oklahoma. In 1956, the United States government ended recognition of the sovereignty of the Odawa tribe in an attempt to “civilize” and assimilate them into mainstream society. It took twenty-two years for the tribe to be reestablished as a federally recognized government in 1978. There are about 15,000 members of the Odawa tribe living in Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin and Oklahoma today.

## A Note on Land Acknowledgements

Land acknowledgment alone is not enough. It’s merely a starting point. Ask yourself: how do I plan to take action to support Indigenous communities? Some examples of ways to take action:

- Support Indigenous organizations like the ones referenced in this display by donating your time and/or money.
- Support Indigenous-led grassroots change movements and campaigns. Encourage others to do so.
- Commit to returning land. Local, state, and federal governments around the world are currently returning land to Indigenous people. Individuals are returning their land, too. Research your options to return your land.

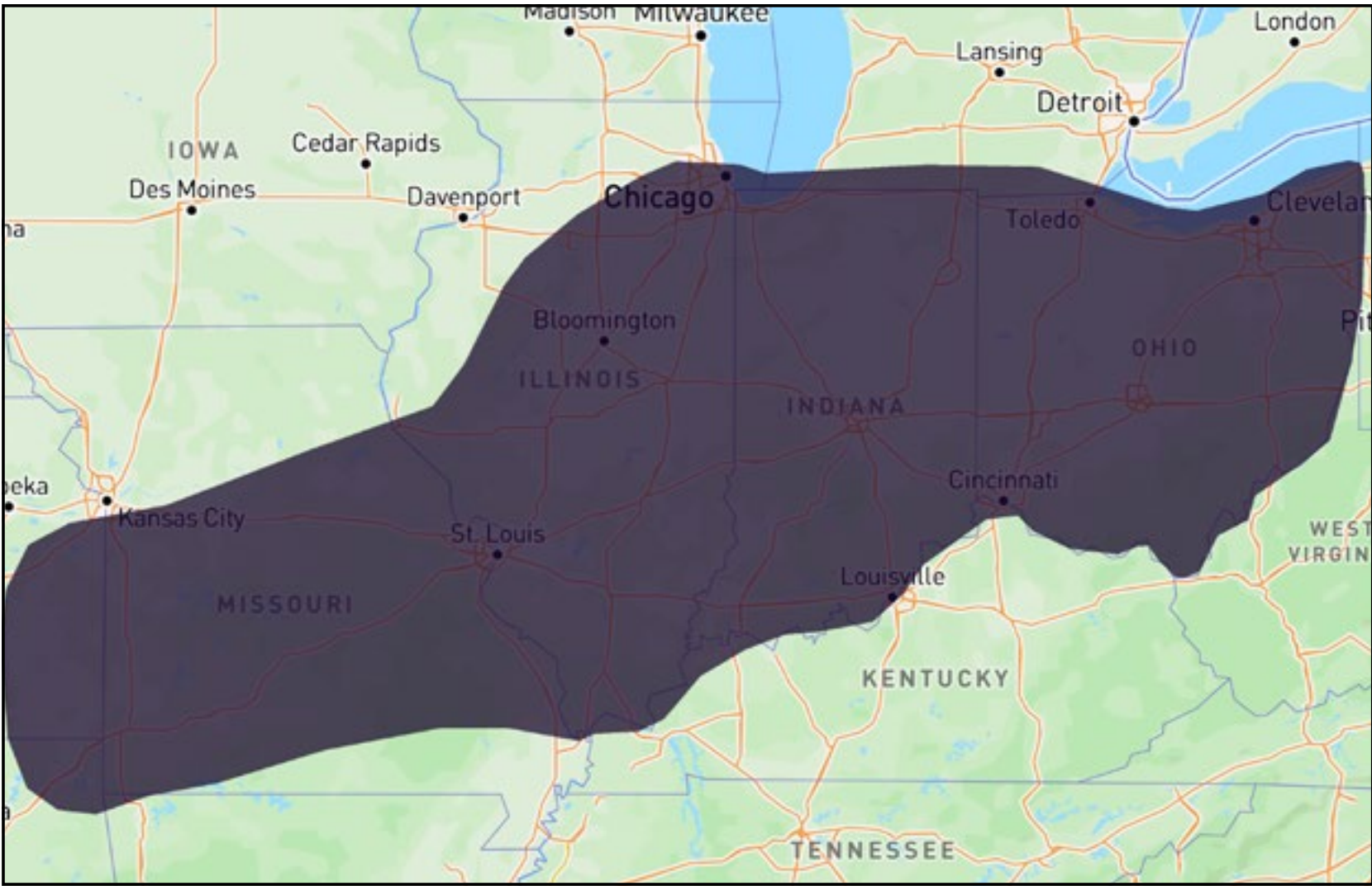




# OTHER TRIBES

## Kaskaskia

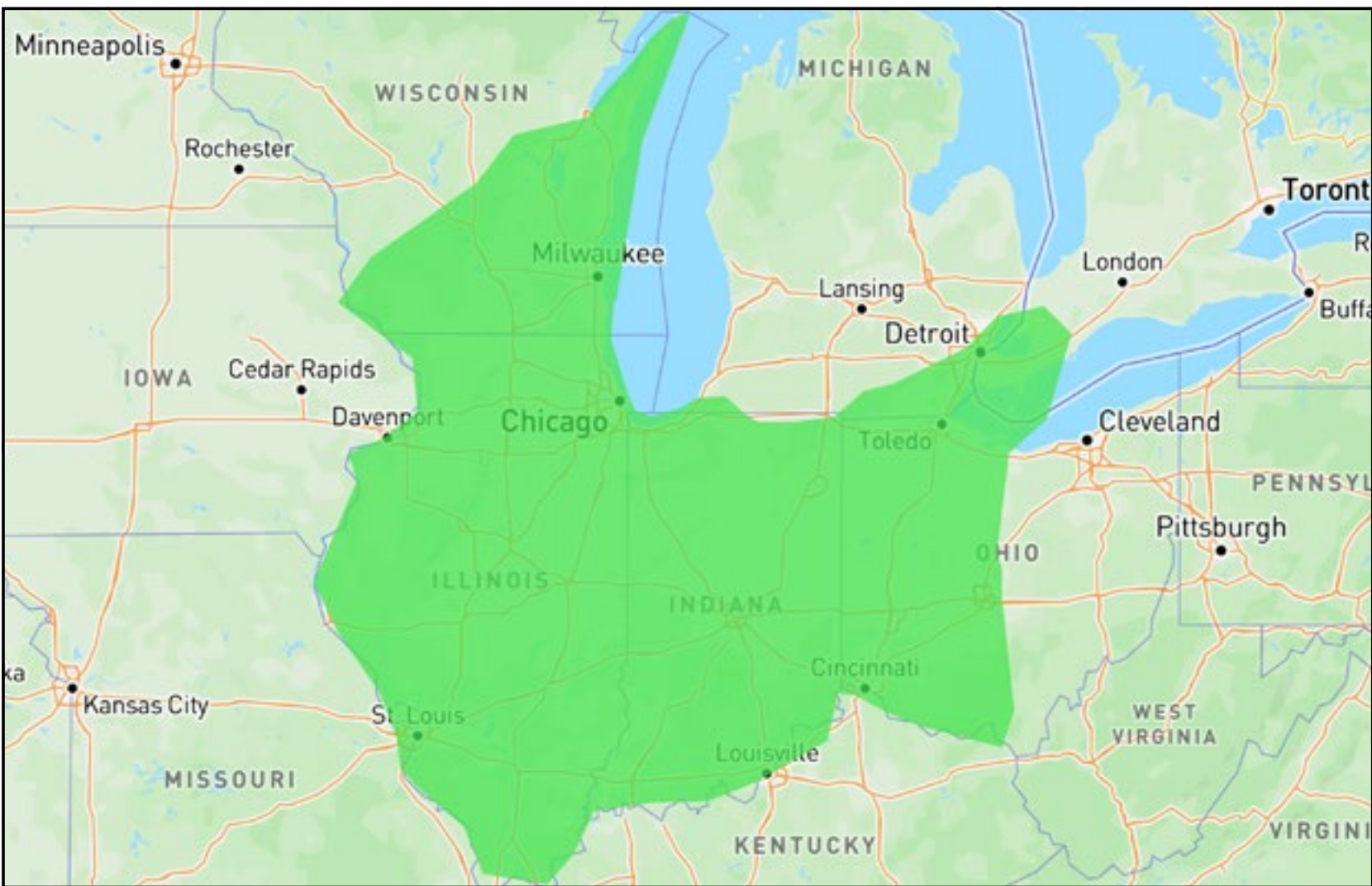
The Kaskaskia were part of the Illiniwek (also known as the Illinois Confederacy), a group of twelve independent tribes with a shared language. Their primary village was at Starved Rock when the Europeans arrived. Unfortunately, due to several factors, the Kaskaskia are gone, but many of their descendants are enrolled tribal members of the Peoria in Oklahoma. The Kaskaskia River near Champaign is named after the tribe.



The original territory of the Kaskaskia

## Myaami

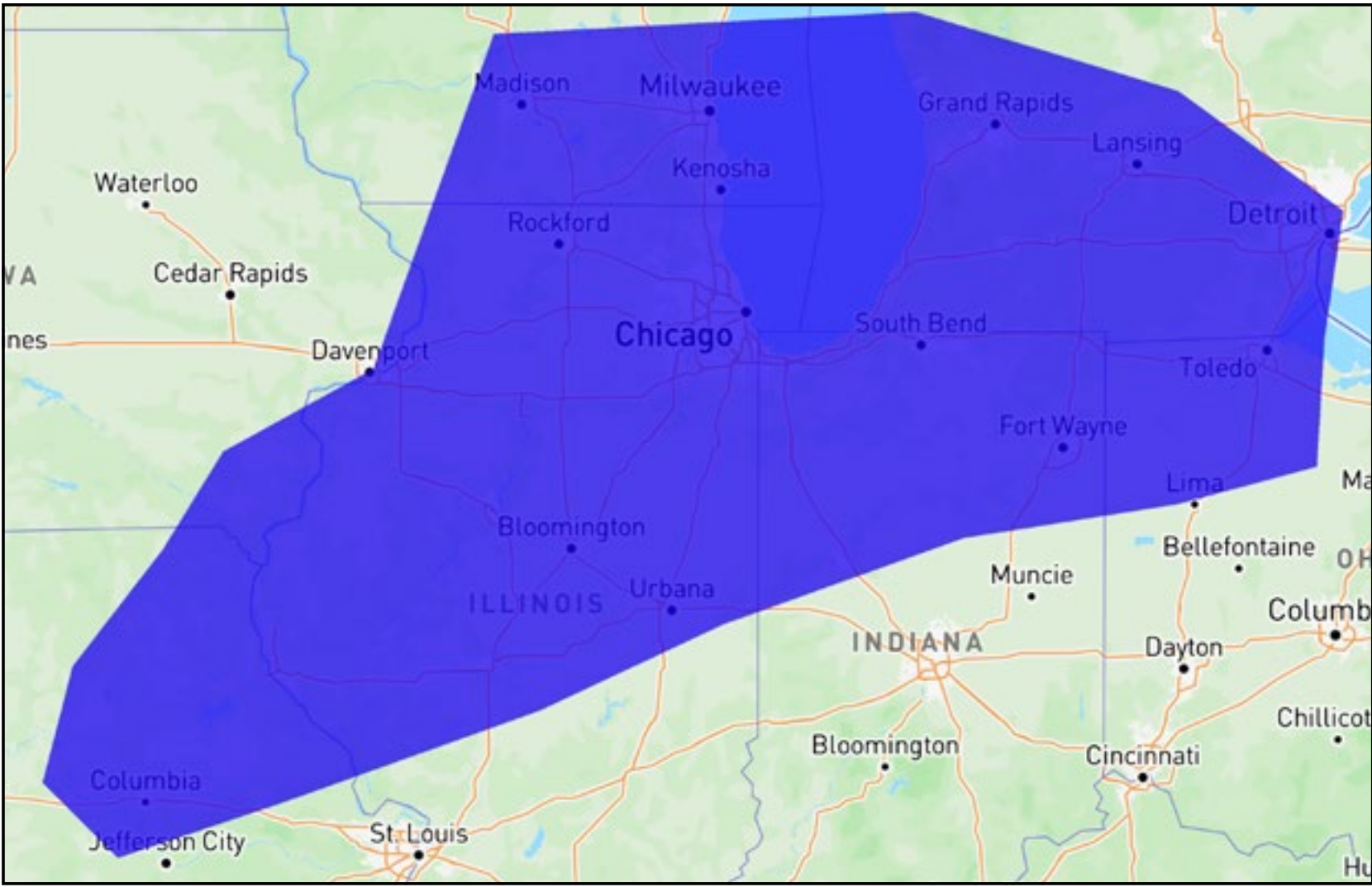
The Myaami were part of the Wabash Confederacy, an alliance of tribes that resided in modern day Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. In 1846, the Myaami were forced to leave their homelands for Kansas and Oklahoma. Today, their descendants are the Myaami Nation of Oklahoma. Although they share a name, Miami, Florida is not named after the Myaami.



The original territory of the Myaamia

## Peoria

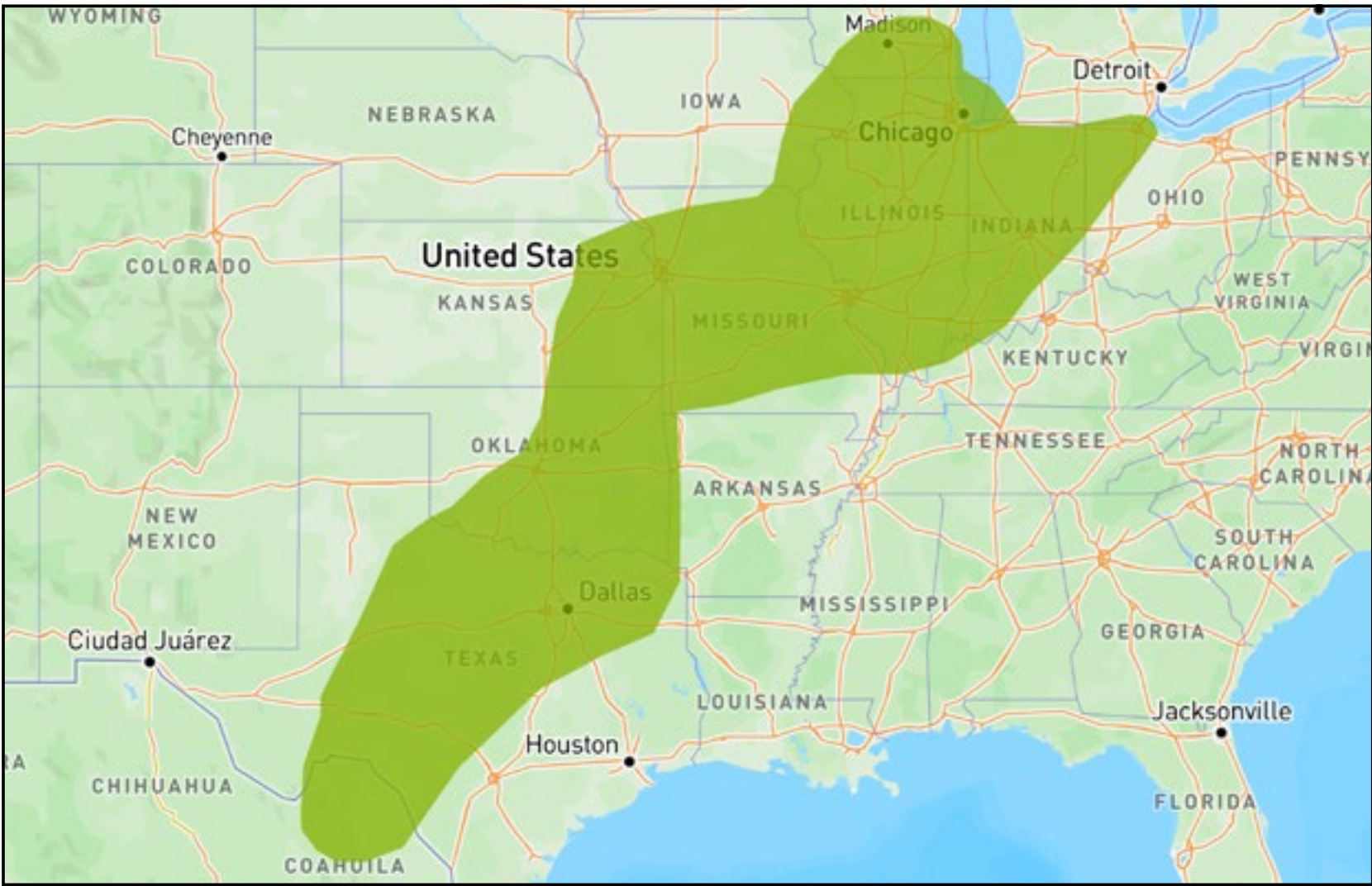
The Peoria were part of the Illinois Confederacy alongside the Kaskaskia. The tribe was removed from the Mississippi River Valley and sent to Oklahoma. Their descendants are the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma. The Peoria have led a successful language revitalization campaign to keep their language alive.



The original territory of the Peoria

## Kickapoo

The Kickapoo were part of the Wabash Confederacy alongside the Myaami. They battled against American expansion into their land alongside Tecumseh in 1811. Their descendants are the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas and the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.



The original territory of the Kickapoo