MINNESOTA CANADIAN BORDER HISTORY

Don Borcherding 2008

Minnesota Areal
Treaty of Paris Summary

Treaty of Paris, 1783

In April 1782 Benjamin Franklin rejected informal peace overtures from Great Britain for a settlement that would provide the thirteen states with some measure of autonomy within the British empire. Franklin insisted on British recognition of American independence and refused to consider a peace separate from France, America's staunch ally. Franklin did agree to negotiations with the British for an end to the war. Joined by peace commissioners John Adams and John Jay, Franklin engaged the British in formal negotiations beginning on September 27, 1782. Although Franklin demanded the cessation of Canada to an independent America, he knew that the British Government of Lord Shelburne, opposed to American independence, was unprepared to accept that offer. Two months of hard bargaining resulted in a preliminary articles of peace in which the British accepted American independence and boundaries—a bitter pill to George III—resolved the difficult issues of fishing rights on the Newfoundland banks and prewar debts owed British creditors, promised restitution of property lost during the war by Americans loyal to the British cause, and provided for the evacuation of British forces from the thirteen states. The preliminary articles signed in Paris on November 30, 1782, were only effective when a similar treaty was signed by Britain and France, which French Foreign Minister Vergennes quickly negotiated. France signed preliminary articles of peace with Great Britain on January 20, 1783, which were followed by a formal peace of Paris signed on September 3, 1783.
Article 2:

And that all disputes which might arise in future on the subject of the boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following are and shall be their boundaries, viz.; from the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, viz., that nagle which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of St. Croix River to the highlands; along the said highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean, to the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River; thence down along the middle of that river to the forty-fifth degree of north latitude; from thence by a line due west on said latitude until it strikes the river Iroquois or Cataraquy; thence along the middle of said river into Lake Ontario; through the middle of said lake until it strikes the communication by water between that lake and Lake Erie; thence along the middle of said communication into Lake Erie, through the middle of said lake until it arrives at the water communication between that lake and Lake Huron; thence along the middle of said water communication into Lake Huron, thence through the middle of said lake to the water communication between that lake and Lake Superior; thence through Lake Superior northward of the Isles Royal and Phelipeaux to the Long Lake; thence through the middle of said Long Lake and the water communication between it and the Lake of the Woods, to the said Lake of the Woods.
Paris Treaty 1783

4 to the most northwesternmost point thereof, and from thence on a due west course to the river Mississippi; thence by a line to be drawn along the middle of the said river Mississippi until it shall intersect the northernmost part of the thirty-first degree of north latitude, South, by a line to be drawn due east from the determination of the line last mentioned in the latitude of thirty-one degrees of the equator, to the middle of the river Apalachicola or Catahouche; thence along the middle thereof to its junction with the Flint River, thence straight to the head of Saint Mary's River; and thence down along the middle of Saint Mary's River to the Atlantic Ocean; east, by a line to be drawn along the middle of the river Saint Croix, from its mouth in the Bay of Fundy to its source, and from its source directly north to the aforesaid highlands which divide the rivers that fall into the Atlantic Ocean from those which fall into the river Saint Lawrence; comprehending all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries between Nova Scotia on the one part and East Florida on the other shall, respectively, touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean, excepting such islands as now are or heretofore have been within the limits of the said province of Nova Scotia.

Mitchell’s Map Paris Treaty
Mitchell Map Lake Superior Area

LONG LAKE SKETCH 1730

THE EARLIEST KNOWN MAP showing "Long Lake" was a sketch made in 1730 for Sieur de la Vérendrye by an Assiniboine chief known as Ochagach. In this and other versions, the Pigeon River and the border lakes between Lake Superior and Saganaga Lake have the appearance of a dinosaur's vertebrae, much as they looked on Mitchell's 1755 map. From N. H. Winchell and Wiessen Upham, The Geology of Minnesota (1884).
United States in 1783 Paris Treaty

Northwest territory 1787
ARTICLE THE SEVENTH.

It is further agreed that the said two last mentioned Commissioners after they shall have executed the duties assigned to them in the preceding Article, shall be, and they are hereby, authorized upon their oaths impartially to fix and determine according to the true intent of the said Treaty of Peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty three, that part of the boundary between the dominions of the two Powers, which extends from the water communication between Lake Huron and Lake Superior to the most North Western point of the Lake of the Woods; to decide to which of the two Parties the several Islands lying in the Lakes, water communications, and Rivers forming the said boundary do respectively belong in conformity with the true intent of the said Treaty of Peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty three, and to cause such parts of the said boundary as require it to be surveyed and marked. The said Commissioners shall by a Report or declaration under their hands and seals, designate the boundary aforesaid, state their decision on the points thus referred to them, and particularize the Latitude and Longitude of the most North Western point of the Lake of the Woods, and of such other parts of the said boundary as they may deem proper. And both parties agree to consider such designation and decision as final and conclusive. And in the event of the said two Commissioners differing, or both or either of them refusing, declining, or wilfully omitting to act, such reports, declarations or statements shall be made by them or either of them, and such reference to a friendly Sovereign or State shall be made in all respects as in the latter part of the fourth Article is contained, and in as full a manner as if the same was herein revealed.
Convention of 1818

ARTICLE II.
It is agreed that a Line drawn from the most North Western Point of the Lake of the Woods, along the forty Ninth Parallel of North Latitude, or, if the said Point shall not be in the Forty Ninth Parallel of North Latitude, then that a Line drawn from the said Point due North or South as the Case may be, until the said Line shall intersect the said Parallel of North Latitude, and from the Point of such Intersection due West along and with the said Parallel shall be the Line of Demarcation between the Territories of the United States, and those of His Britannic Majesty, and that the said Line shall form the Northern Boundary of the said Territories of the United States, and the Southern Boundary of the Territories of His Britannic Majesty, from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains.
DR TIARKS’ PLANNED METHOD OF DETERMINING THE MOST NORTHWESTERN POINT OF LAKE OF THE WOODS

THIS DRAWING illustrated Dr. Johann L. Tiarks’ plan for determining the most northwestern point of Lake of the Woods. Courtesy Public Archives of Canada.

DAVD THOMPSON’S 1824 ANGLE INLET MONUMENT AS RECONSTRUCTED IN 1872
Daniel Webster’s first term as Secretary of State (1841-1843)

During Daniel Webster’s first term as Secretary of State (1841-1843), the primary foreign policy issues involved Great Britain. These included the northeast borders of the United States, the involvement of American citizens in the Canadian rebellion of 1837, and the suppression of the international slave trade. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty, signed August 9, 1842, resolved these frictions in Anglo-American relations. On April 4, 1842, British Foreign Secretary Lord Ashburton arrived in Washington at the head of a special mission to the United States. The first order of business was settling the border between the United States and Canada. Several disputes had arisen from differing interpretations of the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War. Webster and Ashburton agreed on a division of disputed territory, giving 7,015 square miles to

Webster-Ashburton Treaty 1842

![Map of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty 1842](image)
Webster-Ash Burton Treaty 1842

ARTICLE II.
It is moreover agreed, that from the place where the joint Commissioners terminated their labors under the sixth article of the Treaty of Ghent, to wit: at a point in the Neebish Channel, near Muddy Lake, the line shall run into and along the ship channel between Saint Joseph and St. Tammany Islands, to the division of the channel at or near the head of St. Joseph's Island; thence, turning eastwardly and northwardly, around the lower end of se George's or Sugar Island, and following the middle of the channel which divides St. George's from se Joseph's Island; thence, up the east Neebish channel, nearest to St. George's Island, through the middle of Lake George; thence, west of Jonas' Island, into St. Mary's river, to a point in the middle of that river, about one mile above St. George's or Sugar Island, so as to appropriate and assign the said Island to the United States; thence, adopting the line traced on the maps by the Commissioners, thro' the river St. Mary and Lake Superior, to a point north of Ile Royale in said Lake, one hundred yards to the north and east of Ile Chapeau, which last mentioned Island lies near the northeastern point of Ile Royale, where the line marked by the Commissioners terminates; and from the last mentioned point, southwesterly, through the middle of the Sound between Ile Royale and the northwestern mainland, to the mouth of Pigeon river, and up the said river to, and through, the north and south Fowl Lakes, to the Lakes of the height of land between Lake Superior and the Lake of the Woods; thence, along the water-communication to Lake Saisaginaga, and through that Lake; thence, to and through Cypress Lake, Lac du Bois Blanc, Lac la Croix, Little Vermilion Lake, and Lake Namecan, and through the several smaller lakes, straights, or streams, connecting the lakes here mentioned, to that point in Lac la Pluie, or Rainy Lake, at the Chaudiere Falls, from which the Commissioners traced the line to the most northwestern point of the Lake of the Woods, thence, along the said line to the said most northwestern point, being in latitude 49° 23'55" north, and in longitude 95°14'38" west from the Observatory at Greenwich; thence, according to existing treaties, due south to its intersection with the 49th parallel of north latitude, and along that parallel to the Rocky Mountains. It being understood that all the water-communications, and all the usual portages along the line from Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods; and also Grand Portage, from the shore of Lake Superior to the Pigeon river, as now actually used, shall be free and open to the use of the citizens and subjects of both countries.
Michigan Territory 1834

Minnesota Territory 1857
Johnson’s Minnesota Dakota Map

Minnesota Canadian Border
Lake of the Woods NW Angle

Traverse de Sioux Treaty 1851
UNITED STATES BOUNDARY COMMISSION
AT PEMBINA 1871 TO 1876 HEADED BY ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

BRITISH BOUNDARY COMMISSION
1870’S
TELESCOPE USED BY BRITISH ASTRONOMERS TO DETERMINE LATITUDE ALONG BOUNDARY IN THE 1870’S