

AUGUSTIN HAMLIN JR.

Champion of Education & Advocacy

Augustin Hamlin Jr. was a well known Odawa leader, who went by the name Kanapima, meaning "He Who is Talked About."

Augustin was born in Mackinac, here in Michigan. His grandfather was chief for the Odawa of Waganakising (land of the crooked tree).

Augustin was sent by the Odawa to be educated in a Cincinnati, Ohio school. He would learn how to read, write and speak English. While away at school, Augustin had the opportunity to go to Rome, Italy to study.

Augustin became very smart and at the age of 23, he spoke Anishinaabemowin, French, English and Latin and could write in English and Latin.



This is a painting of Kanapima from the 1800's.



Once Augustin returned home from Italy, he was needed by his people. This was because in the early 1800's the American government had a policy of removing tribes from their homeland. The leaders of the Odawa asked Augustin for help because he was extremely smart. Augustin was asked to be an interpreter for one of the most historical events for the Odawa, which was the signing of the 1836 Treaty of Washington D.C.

Augustin and the most important leaders of the Odawa set sail in their canoes, from Harbor Springs, Michigan all the way to Washington D.C. in November. The signing of the 1836 Treaty of Washington D.C. was an agreement the Odawa and United States made together. Augustin translated everything and even negotiated for Odawa rights.

The Odawa were still not safe, it wasn't until 1855 when another treaty was signed, and the Odawa would completely avoid removal. This was because Augustin understood the treaty and knew the law, so he petitioned and wrote letters for his people.

Shortly after the 1855 treaty Augustin Hamlin Jr. walked on. Augustin holds a special place in Odawa history because without him, the Odawa could have faced removal like many other tribes.

Waganakising means: Land of the Crooked Tree. Our people used to bend trees along our lakeshores for landmarks for jiimaan (canoe) journeys and seasonal travel. Crooked trees were also used in tree councils, see information below, provided by the Charlevoix Historical Society..



The land on which the Greensky Hill church sits had long been a meeting place for Native Americans. Legend tells that at one meeting the chiefs of each tribe planted a young maple as a symbol of mutual trust. Each swore that as long as the trees bore leaves they would remain in a state of peace. Said to number just over thirty, each tree was bent and tied with basswood thongs, with the hope the distended trunks would never be taken for lumber. The original number has dwindled to eight. Some visitors to the still remaining trees have reported being filled with an intense feeling of calm and harmony.