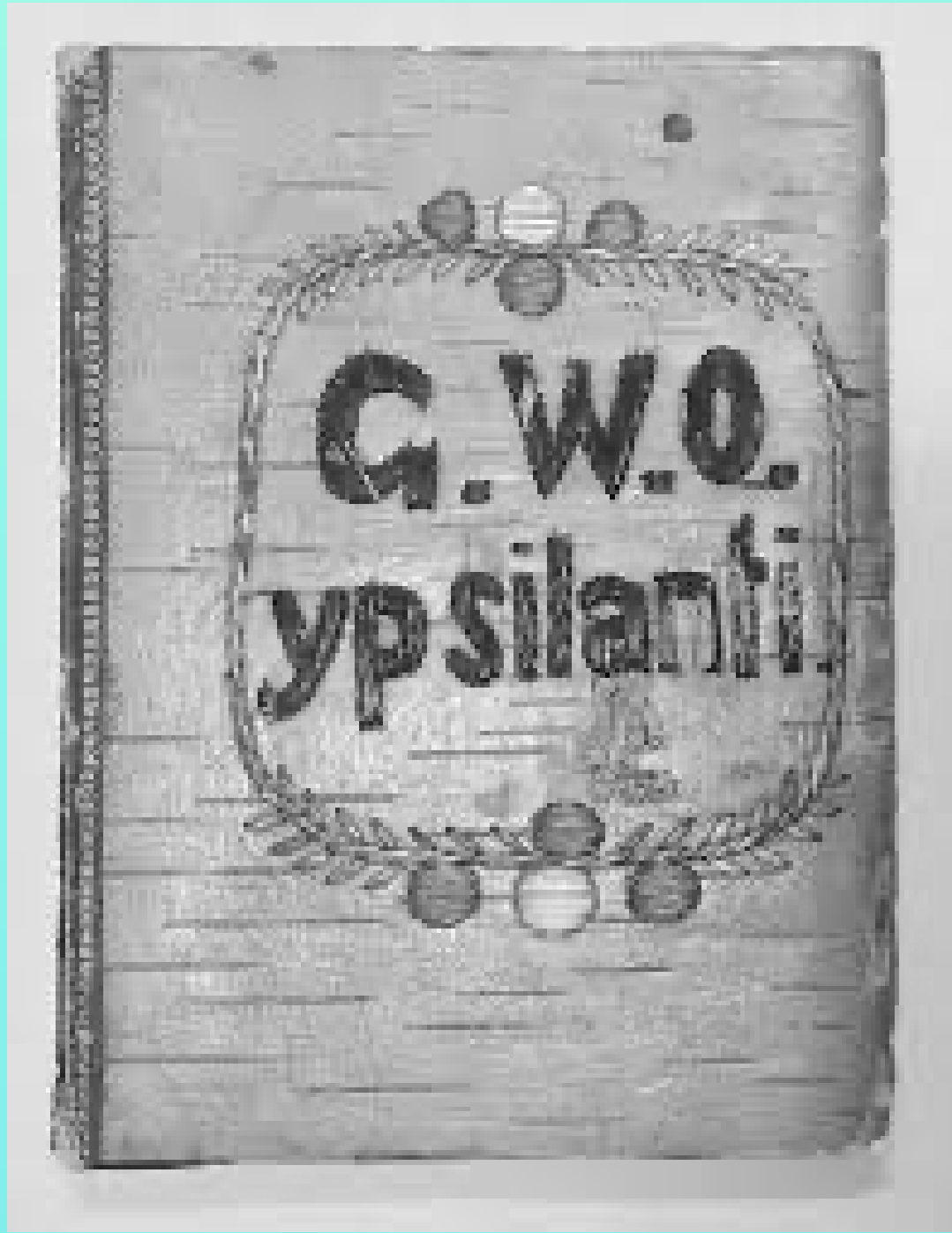


# MARGARET BOYD

*Champion of Education and Traditional Arts*



**Margaret Blackbird Boyd** was born around 1817 in Harbor Springs, Michigan. Margaret was best known as an educator, and artist and more importantly for defending Odawa land rights during the 1870's and 1880's. She grew up in Harbor Springs with her family, including her brother Andrew J. Blackbird. Her father was the powerful war chief, Blackbird, who fought with Assiginack in the War of 1812 against the Americans.



**Some of Margaret's quillwork**



Around 1825, missionaries and local Catholic Odawa, started to realize the growing importance of a Western education. They began choosing bright and promising young Odawa children to send to school. Margaret was chosen, along with her brother William and their cousin Augustin Hamlin Jr. (does this name sound familiar?) to travel to Cincinnati, Ohio. Margaret studied at the Catholic seminary school with her brother and cousin. She returned home to Little Traverse (Harbor Springs), where she became a teacher. She used her education to help a new generation of Odawa learn to read and write. Her efforts to help the community went beyond teaching at the school. She advocated for protecting Odawa lands and resources as well.

In later years, Margaret faced harsh discrimination along with the rest of the Odawa community because of the flood of white settlers to the area. Hundreds of Odawa lost their land and homes. Margaret was outspoken in fighting against these forces, writing numerous letters to government officials in Michigan and working with her brother Andrew, to help Odawa families. In 1876 she took it upon herself to intervene by traveling, alone, to Washington D.C. to meet with President Ulysses S. Grant. An accomplished bead worker and basket maker, Margaret sold her art along the way to pay for train fare and food and eventually arrived at the White House.

**References** LTBB Archives Director Eric Hemenway, **Gah-Baeh-Jhagwah-Buk: The Way it Happened, Blackbird's Song: Andrew J. Blackbird and the Odawa People**

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