

Chief Waubonsee and Pierce Downer

Pierce Downer arrived and first settled in Downers Grove in May of 1832. His permanent settlement was established and remains at 4434 Seeley Avenue. Curiously, Downer settled in the midst of rising tensions amongst Native Americans and White settlers that would lead to the Black Hawk War. For reasons not totally understood, Downer remained while settlers from nearby

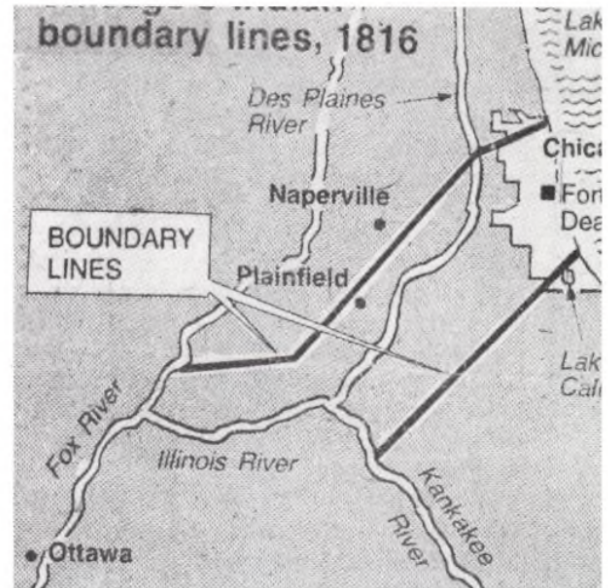


Waubonsee

Naper Settlement (what became Naperville) fled to Fort Dearborn in Chicago for safety. It is speculated that Chief Waubonsee of the Potawatomi may have assured Downer that he would be safe and possibly protected him and other settlers across the prairie. Downer eventually paid the government \$1.25 an acre for 160 acres in the oak grove and surrounding prairie.

Chief Waubonsee chose to be friendly with Downer, despite his presence on Potawatomi land, even though the process of

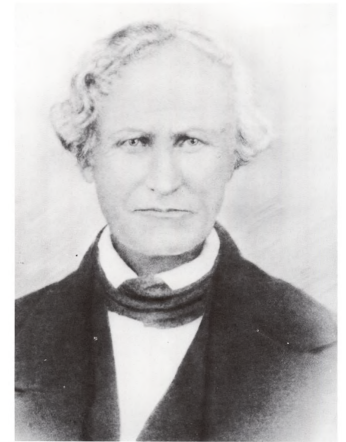
removing Native Americans from their ancestral lands in Illinois had begun years earlier and continued unabated like a tsunami. *In 1816, the US government had purchased a ten-mile corridor from the headwaters of the Illinois River to Lake Michigan in Chicago to provide safe transport for White settlers and, allegedly, Native Americans. This land would eventually be the site of the Illinois-Michigan Canal. By 1835, three years after Downer's arrival, the US government controlled all of the Potawatomi's land.



Indian Boundary

*The northernmost boundary of this corridor, the Indian Boundary, goes through present-day Downers Grove on a diagonal from the southwest at 63rd Street to 55th Street at Carpenter and on through to the northeast toward Lake Michigan.

Dunham, Montrew, and Pauline Wandschneider. "Chapter 1: The Founding." *Downers Grove: 1832-1982*, Heritage Festival Task Force, Downers Grove, IL, 1982.



Pierce Downer
1792-1860