

Michigan Every Day **By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly**

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Treaty of Paris signed; America obtains Isle Royale

The Revolutionary War treaty brought the territory that would become Michigan into the United States. However, another 13 years before the British abandoned its posts in Detroit and Mackinac, giving up its hold on the fur trade. In addition to cementing the future state's place in the Union, the treaty also caused the international boundary running through Lake Superior to swing awkwardly north to capture Isle Royale for the Americans.

While negotiating the treaty in Paris, Benjamin Franklin stubbornly maintained that an odd boundary line through the northernmost Great Lake should separate the United States and Canada. Instead of being drawn down the middle of the lake, as it is through Ontario, Erie, and Huron, the line through Superior would start at the center, but would rise north and west toward present day Thunder Bay, Ontario, including Isle Royale on the American side. It would then return to the center to separate the United States and Canada at what is now the border between Ontario and Minnesota.

Franklin knew about Isle Royale and the legend of its spirit haunted copper mines and he wanted that natural resource for the new country. According to accounts, several American businessmen brought three Chippewa Indians and an interpreter to Paris to tell Franklin about copper on Isle Royale. The island was the only one mentioned by name in the treaty. Franklin's haggling over the island irked the British officials into surrender, according to lore.

Britain's prime minister, Lord Rockingham, tired of two years of argument reportedly said: "Mr. Franklin, I don't give a darn if that island is solid copper. If the treaty conference had lasted another week, you Yankees would have insisted on running your infernal boundary line around Ireland."