

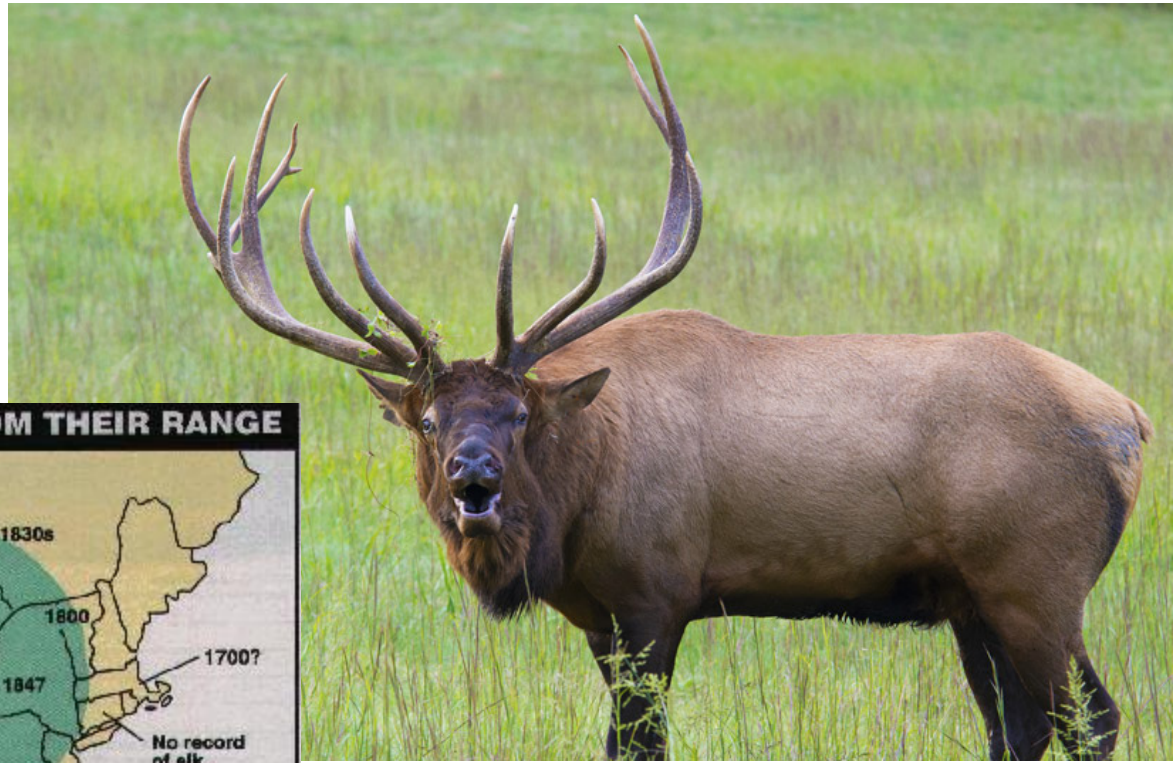
Wildlife in Wauconda area c. 1840

What Was There When the Cooks
Arrived and How Long Did It Last ?

Summary

- If the Cooks had come in 1800 they might have found encountered elk, black bears, wolves and cougars.
 - By 1840, all were rare in Lake County
 - By the Civil War (1861-1865) none of those creatures could be found anywhere in Illinois.
- Moose were never common in Northern Illinois. In 1800 a sighting would have been rare.
- Wild bison were once common over all of Illinois but the last was killed in 1808.
- Coyote – not in Illinois historically
- Deer, fox, beaver, mink, marten, fisher, and muskrat all were in decline due to hunting and trapping

Elk

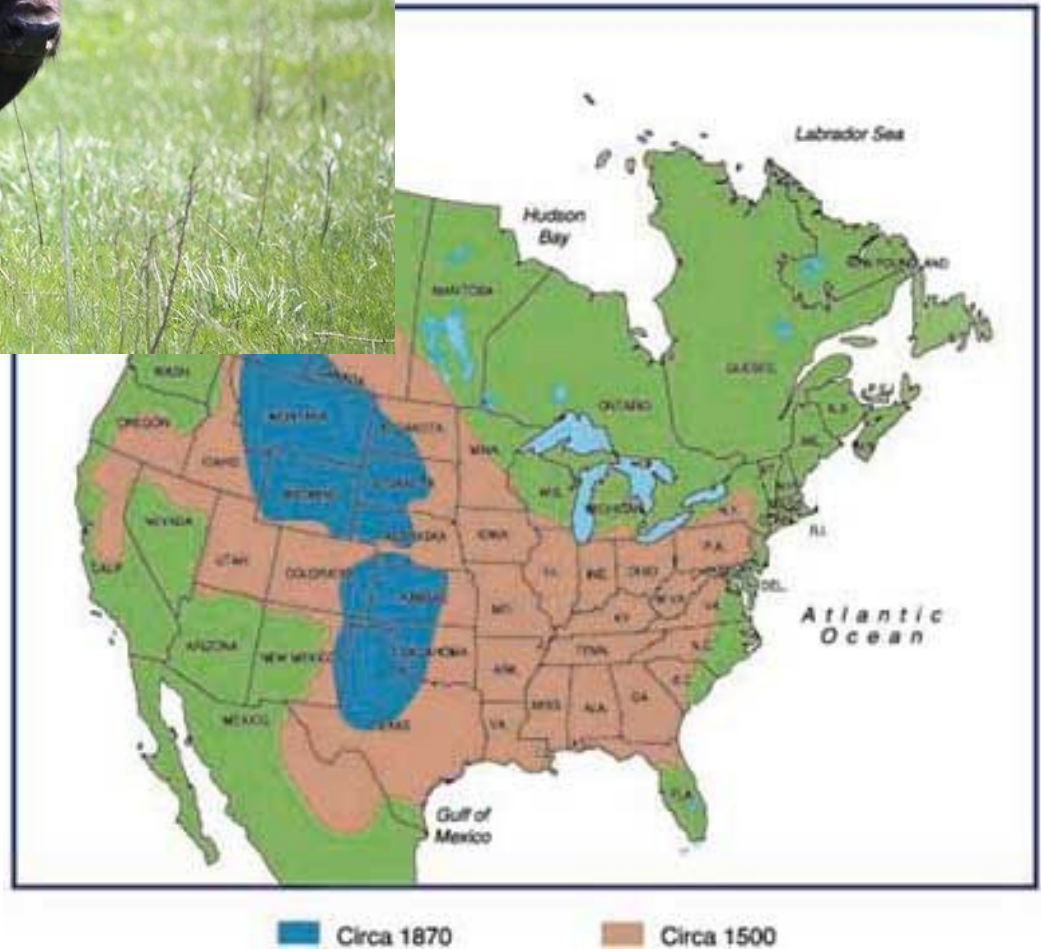


“...elk were probably the most widespread of all American hoofed species, thriving from central California to the Atlantic savannahs; from Mexico into Canada. “

Bison



“... common in the upper Illinois River valley from the mouth of the Des Plaines River to the Starved Rock area ... ”



Gray Wolf

- Illinois legislature in 1822 passed an act “to encourage the destruction of Wolves.” The act provided that the person killing the most wolves (not less than 60) between April 15, 1823, and Nov. 15, 1824, should receive a prize of \$200.
- True wolves likely extinct in Illinois by the 1860s.
- Local governments offered bountys -- from \$1 in the early days to \$5 by the 1890s. The first county bounties (cash payments) for wolves' scalps were issued in 1838. By 1874, the Lake County board offered "twenty dollars for the scalp of a wolf slain."
- Wolf hunts popular winter sport on the prairie, earliest accounts of hunts dating to the 1850s.



Cougars, also known as
mountain lions or Pumas



Bounties -- CT 1684, MA
1742,
PA 1807

Last known killed – OH
1845, IN 1850, IL in 1855

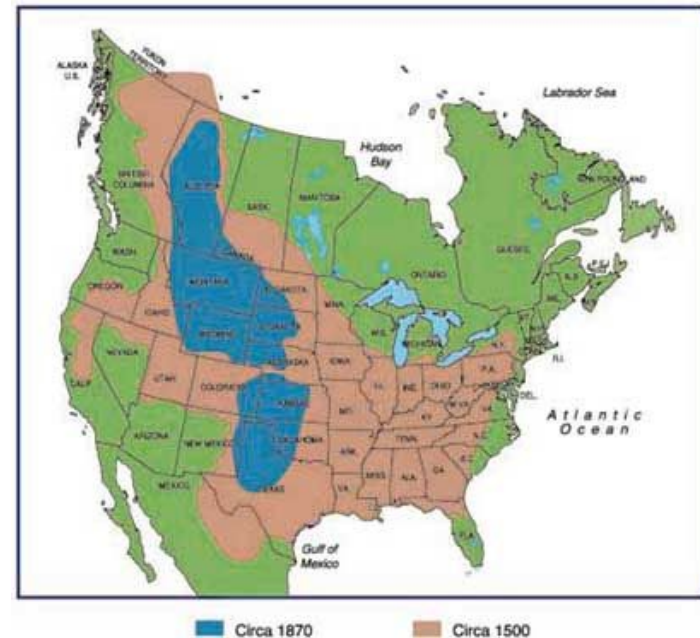
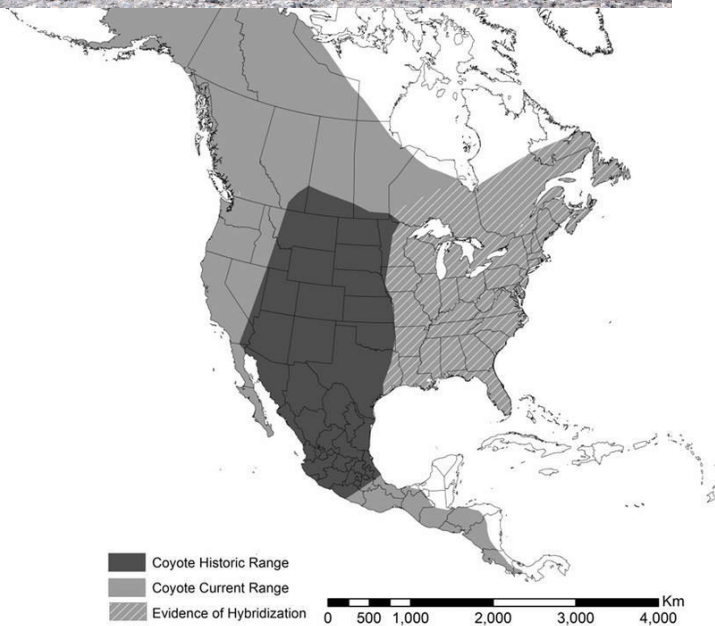
- Lake County was never ideal bear habitat. Not enough forest.
- When forest was cleared, bears left.
- In 1832, a bear hide brought \$6 in Illinois (for comparison, a deer hide as little as 15 cents).
- Bear meat was popular – tastes like pork !
- Common in Illinois in the 1600s, scarce by 1800, gone by the Civil War

Black Bear



Coyote

- Not in Illinois in 1840 !



Deer

