

A CHAPTER OF INDIAN HISTORY.

BY IDA M. STREET.

The true history of the relation between the whites and the Indians in this Mississippi valley is yet to be written. This can never be well done unless the influence of the American Fur Company is understood, and persons who knew this influence and best understood its workings are not here now to tell their knowledge. The "traders" with their subordinates, the dishonest Indian agents, and their opponents, the honest Indian agents, have all passed away. Only a few letters and papers scattered here and there tell the story of this struggle between the Indian's true friend and his false one. I intend, from a few letters in my possession, aided by my father's recollections, to put into available shape one chapter of this history.

At the close of the Black Hawk War two treaties were made at Rock Island, one with the Winnebagoes, Sept. 15, 1832, and one with the Sacs and Foxes, Sept. 21, 1832. The first of these contained a clause embodying in formal language the germs of a policy for the civilization of the Indians. Joseph M. Street, a Kentucky gentleman, who had been made agent of the Winnebagoes at Prairie du Chien in 1828, had been for three years revolving in his mind some plans to improve the condition of the Indians of his agency. His effort to carry out these plans brought him into more or less open conflict with the fur traders and those Indian agents and commissioners who were in sympathy with the American Fur Company and its methods. The object of this company was to keep the Indians savage hunters, who could be easily gulled. Their chief instruments in accomplishing this were "fire-water" and the credit system. Their agents were present at the signing of all treaties with the Indians and took care that the payment for all land sold should be in specie annuities. They also took care that during the year each

Indian should run up a bill at their stores almost equal to his annuity, so that, when the yearly payments were made to the Indians, the most of the money went directly into the hands of the American Fur Company, as well as the skins brought in by the Indians from their winter hunts. Not a cent of this money paid by the government to the Indians went for their education or improvement. Agent Street's policy was to make the Indians wards of the government, and to see that at least a part of the money paid them was spent for the means of civilization. He did not approve of the policy afterwards adopted of building schools among the whites for the Indians, thus removing them from among their own people. In an article in *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, July, 1895, William B. Street, son of J. M. Street, states very clearly in his father's own words his Indian policy. I shall have occasion to refer to that article several times in this account.

As early as 1830, Mr. Street began in a quiet way to take preliminary steps for the carrying out of his ideas. He had feared that owing to the presence of the traders and the lead miners at Galena he could not settle and civilize the Winnebagoes on the east side of the Mississippi. Moreover, the Sioux, and the Sacs and Foxes, were such bitter enemies that it was hard, if they were both to live on the west side of the Mississippi, to keep peace between them. So in 1830 he suggested that the U. S. government buy a strip forty miles wide extending from the Mississippi to the Des Moines, half from the Sioux and half from the Sacs and Foxes, to be held as a neutral ground. His plan was ultimately to settle the Winnebagoes, or at least a part of them, upon this strip. The Winnebagoes were not as warlike a tribe as either of the others; they were in fact rather cowardly. They were on friendly terms with both of the other tribes; there had indeed been intermarrying between them and the Sacs and Foxes. This made them a suitable tribe to occupy the neutral ground. (See letter of Nov. 28, 1832, in this article.)

After the battle of Bad Axe, Mr. Street had asked his Winnebagoes to find Black Hawk and the Prophet who were supposed to be hiding in the Dells of the Wisconsin. Chartier,

a relative of the Prophet, and Decorie brought them in to Prairie du Chien.* Mr. Street made this participation of his Indians in the War an excuse for obtaining permission to have them present at the Sac and Fox treaty at Rock Island in the fall of 1832. He took to this conference such chief men as he knew he could have some influence over; the leader was his devoted friend, Caramanee the Lame.† That part of the tribe who had their agency at Ft. Winnebago, and lived on the upper Wisconsin and Fox rivers, were represented, and with this company came their sub-agent, John H. Kinzie, and the interpreter, Pierre Pauquette. Mr. Street had succeeded in getting his plan incorporated in the treaty. The Winnebagoes were to sell their land east of the Mississippi for the neutral strip west and an annuity, a part of which was to be expended in a school. Mr. Kinzie and the interpreter, Pauquette, were surprised; but finding themselves in the minority in the council then present, yielded, only stipulating that several sections be reserved for Pauquette and his family. The treaty reads as follows:

SEPT. 15, 1832.

Made and concluded at Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Ill., between the U. S. of America, by their commissioners, Major Gen. Winfield Scott of the United States army and his Excellency, John Reynolds, Governor of the State of Illinois, and the Winnebago Nation of Indians, represented in General Council by the undersigned Chiefs, Headmen and Warriors.

Articles I and II are given to descriptions of the lands ceded by the Indians on the east of the Mississippi and south of the Wisconsin, and the neutral strip west of the Mississippi ceded by the United States.

ARTICLE III. But, as the country hereby ceded by the Winnebago Nation is more extensive and valuable than that given by the United States in exchange; it is further stipulated and agreed, that the United States pay to the Winnebago Nation, annually for twenty-seven successive years, the first payment to be made in September of the next year, the sum of ten thousand dollars, in specie; which sum shall be paid to the said nation at Prairie du Chien and Fort Winnebago, in sums proportional to the numbers residing most conveniently to those places respectively.

ARTICLE IV. It is further stipulated and agreed that the United States

*See ANNALS OF IOWA, July, 1895, pp. 90-4.

†See ANNALS OF IOWA, July, 1895, p. 86.

shall erect a suitable building, or buildings, with a garden, and a field attached, somewhere near Fort Crawford, or Prairie du Chien, and establish and maintain therein, for the term of twenty-seven years, a school for the education, including clothing, board, and lodging, of such Winnebago children as may be voluntarily sent to it; the school to be conducted by two or more teachers, male and female, and the said children to be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, gardening, agriculture, carding, spinning, weaving, and sewing, according to their ages and sexes, and such other branches of useful knowledge as the President of the United States may prescribe: Provided, That the annual cost of the school shall not exceed the sum of three thousand dollars. And in order that the said school may be productive of the greatest benefit to the Winnebago Nation, it is hereby subjected to the visits and inspection of his Excellency the Governor of the State of Ill. for the time being; the United States Gen. Supt. of Indian Affairs; of the U. S. agents who may be appointed to reside among the Winnebago Indians; and of any officer of the U. S. Army who may be of or above the rank of Major: Provided, That the commanding officer of Fort Crawford shall make such visits and inspections frequently, although of an inferior rank.

ARTICLE V. And the United States further agree to make to the said Nation of Winnebago Indians the following allowances for the period of twenty-seven years, in addition to the considerations hereinbefore stipulated; that is to say, for the support of six agriculturalists, and the purchase of twelve yokes of oxen, ploughs, and other agricultural implements, a sum not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars per annum; to the Rock River band of Winnebagoes, one thousand five hundred pounds of tobacco per annum; for the services and attendance of a physician at Prairie du Chien, and of one at Fort Winnebago, each two hundred dollars per annum.

ARTICLE VI. It is further agreed that the United States remove and maintain within the limits prescribed in this treaty, for the occupation of the Winnebagoes, the blacksmith's shop, with the necessary tools, iron, and steel, heretofore allowed to the Winnebagoes, on the waters of the Rock river, by the third article of the treaty made with the Winnebago Nation at Prairie du Chien, on the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine.

ARTICLE VII. And it is further stipulated and agreed by the United States, that there shall be allowed and issued to the Winnebagoes, required by the terms of this treaty to remove within their new limits, soldiers' rations of bread and meat, for thirty days: Provided, That the whole number of such rations shall not exceed sixty thousand.

Article VIII. Provides for paying certain claims against Indians.

Article IX. Names certain Indians to be delivered up for misdemeanors.

ARTICLE X. At the special request of the Winnebago Nation, the United States agree to grant by patent, in fee simple, to the following named persons, all of whom are Winnebagoes by blood, lands as follows: To Pierre Pauquette, three sections; to Therese Pauquette, one section; and to Caroline Harney, one section. The lands to be designated under the direction of the President of the United States within the country herein ceded by the Winnebago Nation.

Articles XI and XII provide for carrying out this treaty. The treaty is signed by the three deputations of Indians; eighteen from Prairie du Chien, thirteen from Rock river—south of the Wisconsin river—and eight Indians from Ft. Winnebago.

These names are headed by that of Caramanee. He had signed every important treaty made with his nation since June 3, 1816, but this was his last mark. He died that fall.

In the treaty made at Prairie du Chien Aug. 1, 1829, with these same Indians, Pierre Pauquette had been given two sections of land and his children, Therese and Moses, each one.

The treaty of 1829 was the first one signed by J. M. Street as witness, and in it is the stipulation for three blacksmith shops; one on Rock river, one at Prairie du Chien, and one at Fort Winnebago, with the necessary tools, iron, and steel for the use of said Indians. This was Agent Street's first movement towards an industrial training for the Indians.

The treaty of 1832 was not the first one in which a clause providing for a school was inserted; but it was the first from which the Winnebagoes derived any benefit. In August, 1827, a treaty was signed on the Fox river between the Chipewas, Menominies, and Winnebagoes, and U. S. Commissioners Lewis Cass and McKenney, in which occurs this clause:

The sum of one thousand dollars shall be annually appropriated for the term of three years; and the sum of fifteen hundred dollars shall be annually thereafter appropriated as long as Congress think proper, for the education of the children of the tribes, parties thereto, and of the New York Indians.

As one of the witnesses to this treaty was Henry R. Schoolcraft, U. S. Indian Agent, it is probable that this appropriation was for his Indians. No Winnebago names are signed to this treaty although they are mentioned in it.

Among the witnesses is John Kinzie, and it is probable that he was their sole representative to this treaty. It is certain, at any rate, that they received none of the schooling.

In the treaty of August, 1824, with the Sac and Fox Indians, a blacksmith shop, farming utensils, cattle, and agriculturalists are to be provided by the government as long as the President of the United States may deem proper. This was before Mr. Street came to the Indian country; but his cousin by marriage, Lawrence Taliaferro, Indian Agent at St. Peters, is one of the witnesses. In the Sac and Fox treaty of July, 1830, signed at Prairie du Chiën, which contains the clause providing for the neutral strip, is another clause providing that three thousand dollars annually for ten successive years, shall be applied, in the discretion of the President of the United States, to the education of the children of the tribes. This clause does not, however, seem to have any practical sequel. The discretion of the President of the United States seems to have smothered it. These clauses in the Sac and Fox treaties and their results were no doubt known to Agent Street. It will be noticed that in the treaty of Sept. 15, 1832, very little is left to anybody's discretion. Besides naming the sum, the subjects to be taught in this school are stated and "such other branches of useful knowledge as the President of the United States may prescribe." To make the school still more secure it is to be visited by the Governor of Illinois, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Indian agents, and the commanding officer at Fort Crawford. Indeed the last named gentleman is to make such visits frequently. All these items are added to guard against the money being appropriated for other purposes. No doubt Mr. Street's observation of the execution of other treaties led him to be thus cautious. It will be noticed, also, that the attempts are towards an industrial rather than a book education. Mr. Street's idea, as understood by his family, was that the Indians should be trained to be soldiers, blacksmiths, and farmers; in other words that their hands should be educated.

Though the most decisive step in embodying his plans

had been taken, Agent Street was yet far from their complete fulfilment. In the following letter written two months after the treaty was signed we see some of the objections being made to carrying out its stipulations:

U. S. IND. AGENCY AT
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, November 28, 1832.

Genl. Wm. Clark, Sup. Ind. Affs., at St. Louis,

SIR,—Entertaining opinions at variance with those that seem to have obtained extensively, in relation to the present temper, and views of the Indians on this frontier, I feel it incumbent on me to lose no time in communicating my views on this important subject.

It is generally believed, that the late military demonstration in this quarter, has completely humbled the savage pride of the Indians, and will insure a peace for many years to come. From this conclusion I am compelled to dissent; and am confident that nothing short of the most prompt and active warlike preparations will prevent an extensive combination, against the U. S. amongst the Indians on this frontier.

I have before apprized you, that active exertions, in my opinion, are making to fan the latest discontent of the Winnebagoes on Rock River and near the portage of the Wiskonsin, and to screw their courage up to resist any removal of that part of the nation to the West bank of the Mississippi. This was the *first* stage. *Now*, a disinclination to remove *at all* is freely spoken of, as coming from the Indians. Within a few days past I have secretly learned that the Winnebagoes South of the Wiskonsin, who are under the Sub-Agencies of Mr. Gratiot & Mr. Kinzie, have been sending the *War Wampun* to the neighboring Indians on the West of Lake Michigan and to the Sauks & Foxes: coming through the channels it does, renders it impossible that I can immediately trace it back to the commencement, or certainly test its truth. But so questionable is the shape in which it comes that a due regard to the interest of the U. S. requires that the suspicions (to give no other name) which I am led to entertain be laid before the Department with as little delay as possible.

The principal men of *this Agency* will not under any circumstances, I believe, join the hostile part of their Nation. Yet many of their warriors cannot be relied on. The Winnebeagoes S. of the Wiskonsin cannot suppress their high displeasure against the Menominees and Sioux, who joined the whites against the hostile Sauks & Foxes.

In a conversation with a brother of Mr. Gratiot* this fall, since my return from Rock Island, he said there was much discontent amongst the Rock River Indians, who were greatly dissatisfied with the sale of their country on the Rock River, &c., and entirely opposed to remove West of

*Henry Gratiot, a miner and smelter, living at Gratiot's Grove, east of Galena, was at this time sub-agent for the Winnebagoes on Rock river, at the Prophet's village. His brother, Chas. Gratiot, was a lawyer at Galena. Another brother held some minor official position at Washington, D. C.

the Mississippi. Mr. Kinzie, sub-Agent at the Portage, said to me as we came up from Rock Island, that the Inds. S. of the Wiskonsin would not move West of the Mississippi, but would make a village on the North side of the Wiskonsin near the portage. I urged that the security and future peace of the country required that they should remove West, and that the country was incapable of supporting those now on it with the addition of those from the S. of the Wiskonsin, and difficulties would be inevitable and that all our influence ought to be exerted to induce them to go to the West. He said he thought otherwise and should act accordingly.

Since that time Indians from the Portage, inform me that Mr. Kinzie and Pauquette (the latter a half-breed Winnebeago in the employ of the A. Fur Co., who acted as interpreter for Mr. K. at Rock Island, and who lives at the portage) urged upon the Indians S. of the Wiskonsin not to remove West of the Missi. but to make villages North of the Wiskonsin & near the portage, and to hunt in the winter West of the Miss. Mr. J. Rolette, Agent of the A. Fur Co., just from the Portage, informed me that the Winnebeagoes would not remove West, and that Mr. Kinzie and Pauquette both advised them not to remove. He added that he would do all in his power to prevent them from going West of the Miss. and said it was highly unjust to give that country to them. That the Sioux had been promised when they sold the country that no person should ever live on it and if the Treaty was confirmed the U. S. would violate their promise to the Sioux—and that Genl. Scott, had been misled by incorrect information. You will at once perceive how this sort of language held to Indians is calculated to produce hostile feelings, and lead them to resist removal. And I am told by the Indians from the portage that he held similar language to them then, adding that if they went into the country West of the Miss. the Sioux would kill them.

I, at the moment, reminded him, that his statement in relation to the land purchased of the Sioux was *untrue*. That no such promise was made, and no such engagement appeared in the Treaty. I then said this is the History of the purchase. "In the Spring of 1830 I wrote Genl. *E., then Sec. of War, recommending that a strip of country on the line should be purchased of the Sioux & Sauks & Foxes, by the U. S. and exchanged with the Winnebeagoes S. of the Wiskonsin for the whole of their country S. & E. of the Wiskonsin, and that to induce the Win. to exchange & remove an annuity should be given them, thus placing a wall of Winnebeagoes between the Sioux & Sacs & Foxes." The purchase was accordingly made, but unfortunately no efforts were made by the Government to carry the rest of my views into effect. Had it been done, the War of last summer would have been avoided. And it could have been done if every opposing obstacle had been removed by the Government. The establishment of an Agency at the Portage and subsequently in the Rock River country has done more to prevent the accession of the Winnebeago country S. of the Wiskonsin than anything else. And the continuance of

*Mr. Eaton succeeded by Gen. Cass in 1831.

those Agencies, have had a great influence upon bringing the Sacs & Foxes upon the East side of the Mississippi. And so long as the Agency is continued at the Portage, the Winnebeagoes will resist a removal to the W. of the Miss.. will linger on the East and mischief will ensue. The security of the mining country demands their entire removal. While the Wisconsin *only* divides them from the mines, there will be little security to those who settle on the S. Bank of the Wisconsin which is no larger than Rock River.

The Sacs & Foxes are preparing, I am secretly advised by our Indians, to make a heavy blow upon the Sioux this winter or early in the Spring. I also understand that Mr. Rolette (the Agent of the Fur Co. frequently referred to) says there is no doubt but the Sacs & Foxes mean to be revenged for the slaughter of last summer near Red Cedar.

I am also assured by a Gentleman who was lately in company with the Sac & Fox Traders below, that they (the Traders) said there was no doubt the S. & F. would strike the Sioux this Winter or early in the Spring.

My Indian information is, that the Sacs & Foxes will strike the Sioux first, and then if the Winnebeagoes of Rock-River & the Portage determine to strike the whites, and are successful in gaining over any other tribes during the Winter to join them, an extensive resistance to the whites will ensue.

I would respectively suggest that measures be adopted to overawe the Indians, as early as it is practicable.

The Post at the Portage should be strengthened and a position taken *immediately* somewhere near Kos-quo-nong Lake, or the Mouth of Catfish. The Fort at Dixon's Ferry, occupied & put in a state of defense, and Fort Crawford* occupied by a respectable force. The Fort to be erected near Kos-quo-nong and the one at Dixon's Ferry ought to be manned by a part of the Mounted corps. This would stop all further difficulties with the Winnebeagoes.

Rock Island should be strengthened by troops from Jeff. Barracks, † that had as well be there as where they are. A strong position should be taken with at least two companies on the Red Cedar Creek, about 80 miles West of Prairie du Chien on the South line of the land exchanged with the Winnebeagoes. This would silence the Sacs & Foxes and prevent any movement either against the Sioux, or the Whites.

The Agencies of the Portage & Gratiots should be done away, or removed to Red-Cedar on the West side of the Mississippi. This will again restore the Winnebeagoe Nation to one Agency. The separation into *three*, has made three parties of the Nation, and greatly increased the difficulties of managing them. Discontinue the two Sub-Agencies—and no motives are held up to induce the Indians to remain, and they will readily remove. But so long as their removal involves the interests of white men, it will be very difficult to effect.

*Fort Crawford was at Prairie du Chien.

†Jefferson Barracks was at St. Louis.

These views are respectfully submitted with freedom—for what I feel to be right, and believe will militate to the best interests of the Government, that has committed important trusts to me, [and these] no personal considerations shall deter me from communicating.

The importance of the subject, and the late period at which I obtained much of my information, has compelled me to write in extreme haste or wait for another mail, which at this time is uncertain from the state of the weather. I therefore beg you will excuse the execution of this hasty scrawl.

With Respect I am, Sir, Your mo. obt. st.,

JOS. M. STREET,

U. S. Ind. Agent.

Mr. Street did not feel that he could carry out his plan of education for the Winnebagoes until he could get them west of the Mississippi, away from the traders and "fire-water." His idea was to make a permanent settlement or reservation without the sub-agencies and their opposing interests. The two sub-agents, Mr. Gratiot on Rock river and Mr. Kinzie at the Portage on the upper Wisconsin river, had been with the Indians many years and had great influence. They were bitterly opposed to Mr. Street's plans for the bettering of the Indians. The government, which was to do this for the sake of peace on its own borders, was blind to the true gain and only half-hearted in supporting its agents. Gen. Winfield Scott and Gov. Reynolds had at Rock Island listened to Mr. Street's plan and were in favor of it. The Secretary of War seems to have been secretly opposed while outwardly conceding the points Mr. Street wished.

But the opposition to the removal of the Indians was not so vexatious as were the delays in the building of the school. It seems from the following letter to Gen. Clark, St. Louis, that some one has made representations to the Secretary of War which caused him to hesitate in carrying out the stipulations, although orders had been given in April for them to be fulfilled.

U. S. INDIAN AGENCY AT
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN JUNE 24th, 1833.

Genl. Wm. Clark, Sup., Ind. Affrs., at St. Louis.

SIR,—Mr. P. Choteau handed me your letter of the 12th inst. Its contents are noted, and the several requisitions will be duly observed.

Regulated by the Treaty engagements in my intercourse with the Indians, you need not have apprehended a payment of the annuities *before*

they are due: and my Indians are not in the habit of making *any demands of me.* An intercourse established in confidence and continued in deep affection, had no recurrence to such measures. The 3d Article of the treaty of the 15 Sep., 1832, stipulates for the payment of Ten Thousand Dollars to the Winnebago Nation, at Prairie du Chien and Fort Winnebago annually for 27 successive years, the *first payment to be made in September, 1833.* In relation to the just proportion of the \$10,000 annuity, there will be no necessity of acting upon it *now;* as there is sufficient time for you to receive "instructions from the Department," and know whether the "late information with regard to the movements of those Indians," (from Mr. Kinzie) will induce a change of measures, that had been so well considered, and wisely adopted, for the benefit of the Indians and the peace of the frontiers.

After the receipt of your letter, I addressed a communication to the Department at Washington, containing a *full and faithful* view of this subject. Having had the honor personally to present some of these views to you recently, I am induced to hope you will form a conviction of their propriety and vital importance, and aid my endeavors to procure the prosecution of the plans indicated by the Department in the letter of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, at Washington, to you, of the 2d of April last. If some measures are not pursued to withdraw the Indians from the Wisconsin, and induce them to migrate to the West of the Mississippi a constant military force will be necessary to prevent a rupture. Settled, as under the present mistaken views they now are on the North bank of the Wisconsin, with the whites on the South bank, difficulties can only be prevented by force. For the starving Indians on the north will appropriate the plenty of the whites on the south bank of a small River, and bloodshed and the consequent horrors and expenses of Savage war will ensue.

I am at a loss to conjecture why the progress of the school should also be arrested. The 4th Article of the Treaty of 15 Sep. 1832, expressly stipulates that the school shall be "some where *near Fort Crawford or Prairie du Chien.*" This is for the benefit of the *whole Nation,* intended to be conducted under the Superintendence of a competent person, and in a situation easily accessible to the higher officers in the Government, that its management and progress might be ascertained from personal inspection, which the Treaty provides for.

I know, and have long since advised the Department through your office, that Mr. John H. Kinzie would strenuously oppose the migration of the Winnebagoes of the South of the Wisconsin to the West of the Mississippi. That the Agent of the American Fur Company *here,* would exert all the materials he could operate upon, to prevent the removal as it would interfere with the Fur-trade with the lower Sioux, who hunt on the land given to the Winnebagoes. The Interpreter at Fort Winnebeago is in the pay of the Fur Company, and with Mr. Kinzie is exerting his influence to induce these Indians to make villages on the Wisconsin, below and near the Portage. A reference to my correspondence for the last 6 or 8 months will show that I have apprised the Department of this, & that these

Indians would attempt to remain on the ceded lands, & would only remove upon the appearance of a military force in the country. That then, a removal would take place to the North of the Wisconsin. This has occurred, as a knowledge of Indians & the manœuvres that were in operation to thwart the measures of the Government, enabled me to foresee it would. This influence would, (had the Govt. permitted), have retained these Indians a little longer on the ceded country, and now will be exerted to prevent their removal to the country designed for their reception by the United States.

If prevented from migration by the same sordid influence & misguided councils, these Indians will be kept hanging around the Agency at the Portage, to starve, or be fed at the expense of the United States, until their sufferings will be greater than they can bear, and a rupture with the whites now settled on the South of the Wisconsin, shall demonstrate the impracticability of Indians in a savage state and whites living in such immediate proximity.

On the 28 January last, I submitted my views in relation to the Indians, growing out of the Treaty of 1832, to the Department; and received for answer, that they should receive due consideration. And I was gratified to receive the copy of a letter to you, for my instruction and guide, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington, dated 2d April, 1833. The pervading features, and leading measures of that document, have their origin in that spirit of high benevolence, that no contracted personal projects or pecuniary interests can control. In re-examining the plans indicated by the Department, I cannot believe a system of measures so ably delineated, so highly advantageous to the Indians, and calculated in their operations and maturity to sustain the peace of the frontiers upon a permanent basis of reciprocal benefits and advantages, will be abandoned. And what is the consideration for which the abandonment of these measures are asked? It is to enable the Indians to oppose the plans of the government for their removal to the West. The U. S. have no wish to possess their lands—they are not wanted—but to prevent constant disturbance with the whites; and to enable the United States beneficially to pursue measures provided in the Treaty for the information, improvement, and general amelioration of the present ignorant, degraded & suffering state of these Indians. The success of these measures, the elevation of the Indian mind and the Indian character, rescues them from the rapacious hands of the Traders, and the heartless speculator, and clothes them with an independence unknown in their wild ungoverned estate. Though free to roam the woods as they list, Indians in the vicinity of the whites, and in awe of their power, are the mere slaves of the unprincipled white population engaged in the Indian Trade. From this thralldom it is the duty as it is to the interest of the Government of the U. S. to liberate the Indians, and gradually elevate them to a higher moral and political standard.

In the letter of the 2d April before referred to, the Department directs the payment of \$5,000 of the annuity under the 3d Art. of the treaty of 1832, to be made at Prairie du Chien; thereby drawing a portion at least of the Rock River Indians, beyond the sphere of the misguided influence

operating on them, and giving the agent here an opportunity of correctly impressing their minds with the benevolent views of the Government in their favour. For the events of the last year must have convinced the most skeptical that there is an influence, exerted at this Agency, over the Indians, for the benefit alike of the United States and the Indian. And that altho' in the distribution of money, and other disbursements, an influence is felt and acknowledged, at the Agency at Fort Winnebago—that influence was not made to withdraw the Indians from a connection with the hostile Sacs & Foxes last summer, nor was it beneficially felt to any extent until the entire defeat of the hostile Indians.

The same letter directs the expenditure of the school and agricultural appropriations to be made within this Agency and West of the Mississippi. This letter was written after an examination of my letter of the 28 January, and it is clearly intimated in that letter, these measures were superinduced from a conviction that they would tend to lead the Indians to follow the *established plans of the Government in relation to the Indians*—views I will add, originating in an extensive well digested plan of benevolence, having for their object the improvement of the Indians, their permanent happiness & prosperity, and consequent security of our frontiers.

Is it reasonable to suppose the Department will advise the entire abandonment in *this Quarter*, of these great and interesting objects? Can they consent to the sacrifice of half a Nation of Indians, to glut the cupidity of a few white men?

I have no personal or primary interest involved in this matter, apart from a deep sense of responsibility as a man, and an officer.

With great respect I am Sir, yor. mo. ob. st.,

JOS. M. STREET,

U. S. Ind. Agent.

It will be seen from this letter that the Fur Company had a double motive in preventing the removal of the Winnebagoes to the west; first, they did not wish to let them out of their sight; and second, they did not wish the Sioux driven from their hunting grounds.

The letter of April 2, 1833, from Herring, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFF., APRIL 2, 1833.

SIR.—By the Treaty concluded with the Winnebagoes, Sept. 15, 1832, their country south of the Ouisconsin is ceded to the United States and a District west of the Mississippi is assigned to them. They are to remove from the ceded land and their new country is to be delivered to them on or before June 1, next. . . . For the erection and support of a school, Three Thousand Dollars. For the support of six agriculturalists and the purchase of twelve yokes oxen, ploughs, and other implements of agricul-

ture, Twenty-five Hundred Dollars. For the services of a physician at Prairie du Chien, Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars. . . . The school is to be established near Fort Crawford, at Prairie du Chien; a site near the latter will be selected. It should be at some convenient spot on the west side of the Mississippi. This you will determine upon taking into view the objects of instruction to be attained, as well as the necessity of being somewhat removed from our settlements and from the dangers of the introduction of that bane of all our Indian improvements, ardent spirits. You will cause proper building or buildings to be erected. Let it be plain, comfortable and economical. Such instructions must be given respecting the quality of the work and its inspection as will ensure the faithful execution of the proper contracts. One or at most two buildings are all that can be necessary this year. The number can be increased hereafter should the school become large. As soon as the buildings are prepared you can engage two persons, a male and a female, to take charge of the school at such compensation as you may judge best, not exceeding five hundred dollars for the former and three hundred for the latter, per annum. Let these persons be moral, faithful, and industrious, if possible acquainted with Indian manners and prepared to devote their whole time and faculties to the employment. They must have no other business. Should the number of scholars require and the state of the appropriation admit, additional instructors can hereafter be engaged. The Treaty specifies the various branches to be taught and the objects enumerated seem to embrace all that is now necessary to direct. . . . It is altogether important that the government should be parental. . . . Let a regular report be made semi-annually of all that is done in these subjects (school and agriculture.)

HERRING.

From these instructions it will be seen that in April the Department was ready to carry out the treaty stipulation. Between this, however, and June there seems to have been some interference that called forth Agent Street's letter of June 24, to Gen. Clark.

It is to be regretted that the letter of January 28, 1833, to which he refers as unfolding his detailed plan for the education of the Indians cannot now be found in the files of the Indian Department at Washington. We can only guess how far the actual school fell short of his ideal. He seems to have stipulated for stone buildings as not much more expensive and much more permanent than log. I imagine that his motive in having stone buildings was to assure the Indians of the permanency of the school and the reservation and as a motive with the government against removal. The Depart-

ment, however, did not always agree with him, as this extract from the Commissioner's letter shows :

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, AUG. 10, '33.

SIR,—In answer to your letters of July 19 & 15 . . . has been delayed in consequence of the absence of the Secretary of War. He has instructed me to . . . the accompanying communication from Gen. Street that the Department is decidedly opposed to the location of the school for the Winnebagoes, at any point on the east side of the Mississippi. If it be established within the limits of the civil jurisdiction, it will be impossible for the Government to prevent the traffic in ardent spirits in its vicinity. The evil to be apprehended from this traffic is so serious and so fatal that everything should be made to prevent it. You will therefore select a site for the school on the west side of the Mississippi, as originally instructed.

The Secretary has further instructed me to say that stone buildings of the kind proposed by Gen. Street cannot be permitted. Plain, comfortable log buildings such as can be erected at a small expense, not exceeding one or two in number at present, are all that the Department can sanction. You are therefore instructed to give directions to the agent in conformity with these views.

D. KURTZ.

Gen. Wm. Clark, St. Louis, Mo.

It will be seen from the first part of this letter that the Department sustained Agent Street in his determination to have the school west of the Mississippi; but from the second that they did not agree with him on the material of the buildings.

The following rough draft in Mr. Street's handwriting of a letter that was intended for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, will explain the delays in the building of the school better than anything I can write. Jefferson Barracks mentioned in the letter was at St. Louis :

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, 8 JAN., 1838.

SIR:—The impassable state of the ice on the Wisconsin has delayed your letter of the 31 Oct. which was forwarded from Philadelphia, and of consequence, my answer. You say, "I enclose an extract from the Annual report of Governor Dodge. As a portion of the arrearages reported by him occurred while you were Agent of the Winnebagoes, you are requested to communicate immediately to this office whatever you know respecting the causes that prevented the due application of the appropriations for them."

In the spring of 1833, immediately after the ratification of the treaty of 1832, an order was issued from the Department, requiring me to proceed to erect the buildings and make the necessary arrangements to carry into

effect the 4th and 5th Art. of the treaty of 1832. But for reasons not fully understood by me, this order was countermanded by the Secretary of War before anything of consequence was done. I immediately remonstrated against the suspension of the order but could not succeed in getting it countermanded until winter set in and suspended all effort. In the spring of 1834 I let out the erection of the buildings, and before I could do more, was ordered to the Sac and Fox Indians, and gave up the business of the Winnebagoes to the commanding officer of Fort Crawford under an order to that effect.

When the buildings were ready, the school was commenced, but nothing more was done with the farm. Late in 1834 I was ordered back to Prairie du Chien, too late for active operations on a new farm, and some hesitation was expressed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as to the place where he could suffer the farming operations to commence, and suggesting that only one half the treaty stipulation would be sent to Prairie du Chien.

However, at the beginning of 1835, I ventured to employ hands and set them to work west of the Mississippi near the school, under the superintendence of the Rev. David Lowry, teacher of the Indian school, and through a friend in Illinois procured four yoke of oxen and two horses, for which I scarcely had time to pay and place them upon the farm before I was again peremptorily ordered to the Sacs and Foxes, and the operation here was again committed to the officer commanding Fort Crawford from the 30 March, 1835.

The commanding officer who unwillingly took charge of the Winnebago Agency (Col. Taylor*) did not feel at liberty to enlarge the operations or increase the expenditures which I had only commenced, owing to the intimation from the Department that only half the treaty stipulations would be expended at Prairie du Chien and the other half sent to the Portage. Notwithstanding the whole appropriation for the farm for 1835 was finally sent here after half the year had expired, yet inasmuch as no further order accompanied it, Col. Taylor declined expending it. During a temporary command of Captain Jowitt† in the last winter (1836-7) in the absence of Col. Taylor who had gone to Jeff. Barracks, he determined to adopt measures for carrying fully into effect the 4th & 5th articles of the treaty of 1832, as to the school and farm. Under his directions the necessary requisitions were made, but the hands and oxen did not reach Prairie du Chien until my return here late last spring under the order of Governor Dodge. So that the Indians have lost the use and benefit of six yoke of oxen and three hands, from the spring of 1833 until that of 1837.

You will perceive that I was prevented from acting by an order from the Sec. of War, until ordered to the Sacs and Foxes, and when again about to put the farm into active operation, ordered back to the Sacs and Foxes, so that I could have no opportunity of doing anything for the Winnebagoes in furtherance of a scheme of improvement, obtained of Gen. Scott and

*Zachary Taylor, afterwards Gen. Taylor and President of the United States.

†Captain in 1st Regular U. S. Infantry.

Gov. Reynolds for these Indians at my earnest solicitation. And the hands to which the business was committed, were so full of military duties, as to leave him little time to devote to Indian improvement, besides Col. T. felt averse to the measure, believing it would not succeed.

Through opposition from the traders, and natural habits of idleness with Indians, and a distaste for any restraint, on the subject of literary improvement, the advances have been slow. In the early commencement of the school the Indians did not send children enough to require the whole expenditure of the school fund. Last spring on coming again to this Agency, I changed the plan of reception and exerted myself in conjunction with the principal teacher, Mr. Lowry, to put the school into full operation, and now Mr. Lowry assures me that he can get pupils to any amount he may inform the grown up Indians can be taken.

The Col. Taylor mentioned was Zachary Taylor, who fairly represents the attitude of the average military man towards the Indians, not only then but since. There was some warrant for the scepticism of army men in regard to the Winnebagoes. They were the most cowardly and treacherous Indians in the upper Mississippi valley at that time. Their action in the surrender of Black Hawk, while to the advantage of the United States, did not inspire respect among military men. The army officers, many of them, believed that the Winnebagoes were naturally mean and that nothing could be done for them. Mr. Street believed that they had simply deteriorated through their long intercourse with the lowest class of whites, and through the neglect of their former agents. Their interests had never been so well looked after as those of the Sacs and Foxes, for instance.

Mr. William B. Street has the following recollections of the delays in the building of the Indian school:

In the spring of 1833 father had received permission to go on with the school, had selected a place on Yellow river (in what is now Iowa), and let the contract for a stone building, but through the influence of the traders with Mr. Cass the work was stopped. When the contract was let the house was to be completed by fall and father got Mr. Lowry to consent to come out and take charge of the school. Father then took a surveyor, and guard of soldiers from Col. Zachary Taylor, commanded by Lt. Geo. Wilson, and ran the line of the "Neutral Ground" which had been given to the Winnebagoes in exchange for their land south of the Wisconsin river by the treaty of Sept., 1832. This line started from the Mississippi just above Prairie du Chien and ran to the main forks of the Des Moines. While he was gone on this trip the work on the school at Yellow river was stopped.

by order of the Sec. of War. When father got home, Mr. Lowry had made his arrangements to come, and as father's family were in Jacksonville, Ill., and he expected them to remain in Kentucky until spring, he gave Mr. Lowry the use of his furnished house in Prairie du Chien until the spring of 1834. By this time Gen. Street had obtained permission to go on with the building and Mr. Lowry occupied temporary quarters at Yellow river until the building was completed in the fall of 1834. In the spring of 1835 he bought oxen, cows, and horses, in Sangamon Co., Ill., and they were driven up by the men who were to open the farm in connection with the Yellow river school, and were in charge of an old friend of father's, Rev. John Berry.

The fact is that Gen. Street drew up the treaty of Sept. 15, 1832, and in the article providing for the school he named the sum of \$3,000, showing that he intended having good buildings, but when he first proposed a stone building the Secretary of War opposed it. Gen. Street finally succeeded in getting a substantial stone house.

In his letter of 1838 Agent Street states that in the beginning of 1835 he ventured to employ hands to open the farm under the oversight of Mr. Lowry. The following mutilated copy of a report dated May 25, 1835, sent to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, shows how he was trying to keep up his courage and the faith of the Department till something worth while should be accomplished. In this there is no complaint of the obstacles and hard conditions spoken of in his later letter of 1838.

SAINT LOUIS, 25 MAY, 1835.

SIR:—When ordered by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to descend to Rock Island, previous to my leaving Prairie du Chien, I entered into a hasty examination of the Winnebago school and farm. The statement in relation to the farm was laid before you in another document and the accompanying statement in relation to the school is now herewith respectfully laid before you.

There was on the 30 April last in the Winnebago school six pupils, some of whom could read, and two were writing. Peace between the Winnebagoes, Menominees, and the Sacs and Foxes, subsequently concluded under promising auspices, gives high promise of harmony and peaceful intercourse between these Indians, that will be favorable to the progress of learning and civilization amongst them. Many Winnebagoes were visiting the school and minutely enquiring into everything relating to both the school and farm, and expressing much satisfaction in what their Great Father was causing to be done for them, and going off as they said to get their families to come and see it, and some promised to bring their children and leave them at the school. Several influential Indians remarked, that now peace was restored with the Sacs and Foxes . . . upon

our own terms, we will remove over to our lands west of the Mississippi. . . . [We will make] our summer village near the school and farm. Recent events, . . . the restoration of peace under the most promising appearances of . . . me to entertain high hopes of success both in the farm and the school. [In] a few more years numbers of Indians will be engaged in farming and settling on the lands near the school, many will be living in the school, and others coming from their own wigwams to partake of the instruction imparted. Everything now bids fair for the entire success of these interesting experiments, if the means set apart by the Indians are properly applied to the intended object—the turning the attention of the Indian from a roaming life, dependent upon the success of his hunting, to a settled life, dependent for support on the products of the soil. Once provide for [the Indian] a sure supply of food and the simple apparel he requires, without hunting, and civilization and a love of instruction will follow.

The day I left Prairie du Chien the teacher in the school informed me three new pupils had been brought in, making nine in all.

Very respectfully, your mo. obdt. Servt.,

JOS. M. STREET,
U. S. Ind. Agent.

GEN. WILLIAM CLARK, Supt. Ind. Affrs.

P. S. I also herewith have the honor to hand you a letter from the principal teacher in the school, to me. He is a man of high intellectual endowments, and an experienced practical farmer, who under existing circumstances and a deep solicitude for the improvement of the Indians, has without compensation, undertaken such general superintendence of the farm as his duties in the school may permit.

With high consideration & respect, yr. mo. obdt.,

JOS. M. STREET.

GEN. WILLIAM CLARK.

The letter sent is more full and comprehensive.

J. M. S.

It is to be regretted that the document in regard to the farm referred to in the opening of this letter, is not to be found.* As the farm was the project most dear to Mr. Street's heart it is probable that that letter would have disclosed to us more fully the difficulties under which he was laboring.

This letter is dated at St. Louis and was written probably while Agent Street was down there attending to the annual food supply for the Sacs and Foxes. In accordance with their treaties they could be paid in money or provisions,

*At the request of U. S. Senator William B. Allison, search for the document referred to has been made in the War Department and in the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. But it has not been found.

as their agent and the chiefs thought best. As Gen. Clark's headquarters were in St. Louis this letter was probably intended more for the eye of the Secretary of War than for that of the Superintendent. Gen. Clark was a friend of Mr. Street and usually approved of his plans.

Among the papers of Agent Street is a badly mouse-eaten copy of a letter without date, signed D. Lowry (David Lowry, head of Indian school). From this I make the following extracts to show how smoothly Indian affairs were managed sixty years ago. The first of the letter, which is missing, had evidently been given to a plea that the superintendent of the school shall be also overseer of the farm, for the present at least. He adds to other reasons the following :

Moreover in laboring with the Winnebagoes to induce them to cultivate the soil it will be necessary for a few years at least to furnish at planting time, seed. It must devolve on some person to see that this seed is saved and carefully stored away; and what place would be more suitable than this for that purpose and who would be more likely to have it done than the manager of the school.

I will embrace this early opportunity of making known that the period for which the present hands were engaged expires next March and none of them expect to continue. I will further state that such is the demand for labor in the country that it will be impossible to fill the places of the hands on the farms without an increase of wages. \$15 per month is all that Col. Taylor would suffer me to give the present hands. He stated if they could not be obtained for that amount the farming operations must stop. After considerable efforts I succeeded in procuring two drunken discharged soldiers to engage.

As Mr. Street states in his letter of 1838 that he engaged hands to open the farm in the spring of 1835; but did not succeed in getting it well started till 1837, this may have been written in the fall of either 1835 or 1837.

Imagine drunken soldiers as the instructors of the Indians in agriculture! Is it any wonder that the farm was tardy in its success? Although the last of the letter is much mutilated, the broken sentences indicate that there was difficulty in collecting what little money the instructors were entitled to.

I will add in conclusion that [I have not] been able to draw any money for my services [since the] beginning of the present year. The reason

[given] by the disbursing officer is that this year's appropriation for the school has not come on, and although several thousand dollars of unexpended funds which had been appropriated last year and the year before are now in his hands, he is not at liberty to use any part of that amount to extinguish debts contracted this year. The consequence has been I have not only labored under inconveniences myself, but have had much difficulty in retaining the hands, as their pay had been promised quarterly. Should the above rule be still adhered to, I know not how the hands who expect to leave in March next can be paid for the time they serve after Jan. 1, as there will be no money on hand for [such a purpose].

Mr. William B. Street thinks this letter was written to his father, but it may have been addressed to Mr. Grundy and have accompanied the following letter written by Mr. Lowry to Mr. Street:

WINNEBAGO SCHOOL, SEPT. 1, 1837.

DEAR BRO.—On my arrival at the time appointed the steamboat was just leaving, which was a source of deep regret as I was desirous to see you again before you set out for Washington. On several accounts I was particularly anxious to converse with you concerning my letter to Mr. Grundy, which I now commit to your care. You will please read it and when you meet with Judge Grundy, if he seems not to have forgotten me hand it to him with such remarks as may seem proper. Should he signify a disposition to use his influence as requested you can determine the manner better than I can. I would thank you also to mention the subject of my salary to Gen. Dodge, either by permitting him to read Mr. Grundy's letter before you hand it over or in conversation by yourself.

I know a variety of other subjects in which you are personally interested will claim your attention while in Washington and should my case be at all in the way let it [drop], as I am extremely anxious that your own plans as to future . . . shall be carried fully into effect; for I regard your connection with the Winnebagoes of more importance than mine.

I think in this matter I am far from wishing to snatch a favorable moment while friends are in Washington for the purpose of enriching myself beyond what is right; for I surely believe that other situations are in my command in which my temporal interests might be better served than here, and with much more pleasure to myself and family, and should the government continue their present parsimonious course towards me and refuse your return to the Winnebagoes, I now think my stay here will be short. True I am [willing] to be of service to the Indians and forego earthly enjoyments to some extent for their [advancement, yet] think the Department ought to afford a fair remuneration for my efforts. My whole time is now employed for the salary of \$500 when \$1,000 has been refused elsewhere in situations much more desirable. Mr. Brunson is now on a salary of \$1,000 as missionary to the Indians and has been for two years, and what has been done in that time? Just nothing. I [will] venture to-

say that a similar result to the one [obtained] through my instrumentality among the Winnebagoes can not be found anywhere to have taken place in the same length of time, leaving out of [account] the embarrassing circumstances under which I have been compelled to operate. Yet it seems to me that government would have me lie at the feet of the Department begging the privilege of staying here and at the same time regard my efforts with such indifference as not to [include the report of] the institution in their annual reports.

Should my additional allowance be granted I would suggest that it be taken from the farm appropriation as there will no doubt be an annual surplus in that fund. This should be given as a remuneration for superintending the farm.

D. LOWRY.

Mr. Street's trip to Washington was to take on the Sac and Fox deputation for a treaty; Black Hawk and Keokuk were both of this party. His personal business, to which Mr. Lowry refers, was the settlement of the vexed question as to his agency. His own letter of 1833 states that the Secretary of War had arbitrarily ordered him to the Sacs and Foxes several times during the years from 1833 to 1836.

Mr. William B. Street's explanation of his father's difficulty with the Secretary of War is as follows:

Mr. Cass had from his first entering upon the duties of his office by appointment as Sec. of War under President Jackson in 1831, opposed father in every way he could, and would have removed him from office except for the personal friendship of Gen. Jackson, who said in reply to Mr. Cass when he asked for his (Street's) removal, "I know Gen. Street is a Whig, but he is an honest man, and I shall keep him in office while I am President." Seeing that Gen. Street's heart was set on improving the Indians by establishing a school, Secretary Cass stopped the work in 1833 and '34; sent him away to Rock Island; and when through the influence of Richard M. Johnson he was permitted to return to the Winnebagoes, Mr. Cass again by the change of the full agency at Prairie du Chien to a sub-agency caused Gen. Street to be sent again to Rock Island. There he remained till the fall of 1837 when he again obtained permission to return to Prairie du Chien in order to place the Winnebago school and farm on a permanent footing. The Superintendent, Rev. David Lowry, had complained that they were not prospering on account of the opposition of the traders and lack of proper care on the part of the government in carrying out the stipulations of the treaty of 1832.*

While I do not think Gen. Cass was a personal enemy of Mr. Street—I see no reason why he should be—I do think

*The undated letter of Mr. Lowry may have been Aug., 1837.

that he was a man easily influenced by the American Fur Company. In the year 1820 he had taken an expedition through the Indian country west of Detroit, by order of the Secretary of War. During this trip he must have made up his mind that the Indians were not worth saving. In this he agreed with the American Fur Company. Whether this was an honest conviction or not, I have no means of knowing. It is possible that political reasons may have been at the bottom of Gen. Cass' opposition. Mr. Street was a Whig and had been appointed by President Adams at the suggestion of Henry Clay. Clay and Street had studied law together in Humphrey Marshall's office in Kentucky. Gen. Jackson, at that time practicing law in Tennessee and Kentucky, had known Street. Moreover he had himself studied law in the office of Col. Stokes of North Carolina, who was godfather and relative of Mr. Street. There is no doubt that President Jackson kept Mr. Street in office out of personal esteem and friendship. But in 1837 Mr. Street's friends were passing out and a new President and cabinet had come in that knew him not. He still had power enough to make an excellent treaty for the Sacs and Foxes. His relations with these Indians would form another chapter of Indian history. Yet in one respect his trip to Washington in the fall of 1837 was a failure. He was made agent of the Sacs and Foxes and stationed at the new agency on the Des Moines river. From this on he was too far away to look after the Yellow river school. Its history after 1837 is another interesting chapter, for which I have not the material at hand.

BY LIGHTNING.—As the post-holes for the telegraph are completed to Bloomington, [Muscatine], we shall, probably, be able to give our readers "News by Lightning," in the course of two or three weeks.—*Democratic Enquirer*, July 4, 1848.

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