

MOVING THE WINNEBAGO INTO IOWA

*Edited by William J. Petersen**

The story of the moving of the Winnebago Indians into Iowa is replete with colorful episodes — both humorous and pathetic. The documents contained herein are from the Ayer Indian Collection housed by the Newberry Library in Chicago. They are written in longhand, the one by Governor Henry Dodge and the other the official record of the Secretary of the meetings held by General Henry Atkinson with the Winnebago Indians.

To understand the background of the negotiations which follow one must go back to August 19, 1825, when a treaty was signed at Prairie du Chien between the United States and the assembled representatives of the Chippewa, Sauk, Fox, Menominee, Winnebago, Ottawa, and Potawatomi Indians. No cession of land was involved, the main purpose of the treaty being to allow the United States to draw a line in what is now Iowa limiting the respective hunting grounds of two bitter foes — the Sioux on the north and the Sauk and Fox on the south.

The Treaty of 1825 drew a line commencing "at the mouth of the Upper Ioway River, on the west bank of the Mississippi, and ascending the said Ioway river, to its left fork; thence up that fork to its source; thence crossing the fork of Red Cedar River, in a direct line to the second or upper fork of the Desmoines river; and thence in a direct line to the lower fork of the Calumet river; and down that river to its juncture with the Missouri river." Two great Americans, William Clark and Lewis Cass, represented the United States in this treaty which created the famous Neutral Line in Iowa.

Five years later a second meeting was called at Prairie du Chien because it was plainly evident a thin line was an ineffective barrier against centuries of implacable hatred. On July 15, 1830, the second and third articles of a treaty between the United States and the confederated tribes of Sauk and Fox, western Sioux, Omaha, Oto, and Missouri Indians created the "Neutral Strip" or Neutral Ground. The Sauk and Fox agreed to surrender a

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strip twenty miles wide on the south of the line established by the Treaty of 1825, while the Sioux ceded a similar amount to the north of it. Thus, there was created a neutral territory forty miles in width between the Mississippi River and the Des Moines River.

The creation of this neutral territory, or "Neutral Ground," did not throw open the above land to white settlement. Indeed, any possibility of entering it, which future settlers might have anticipated, was extinguished by the Treaty of September 15, 1832, when the Winnebago were granted the eastern portion of the "Neutral Strip" in exchange for their lands in Wisconsin, title to which had been extinguished by the Treaty of 1829 at Prairie du Chien. The Treaty of 1832 was to take effect on June 1, 1833.

The Winnebago were loathe to move from their homes in Wisconsin — located largely in the Prairie du Chien area, around Fort Winnebago at present-day Portage, and on the Rock River. Only a handful reluctantly moved across the Mississippi and very few children attended the Winnebago school that had been set up for them.

Finally, on November 1, 1837, a treaty was signed in Washington "between Carey A. Harris, thereto specially directed by the President of the United States [Martin Van Buren], and the Winnebago nation of Indians, by their chiefs and delegates" whereby the said Winnebago agreed to remove from Wisconsin across the Mississippi into the Neutral Ground within eight months of the ratification of the Treaty. Furthermore, the Winnebago also agreed to "relinquish the right to occupy, except for the purpose of hunting" a twenty-mile stretch of the Neutral Ground beginning at the Mississippi and extending twenty miles westward. In consideration for this cession, and at the earnest solicitation of the Chiefs, the United States set \$200,000 apart to pay certain individuals with the remainder to be applied to the debts of the Winnebago nation. A second provision directed the President to pay \$100,000 to all relations of the Indians [half-breeds] having less than one quarter of Winnebago blood.

Next, the sum of \$7,000 was appropriated to help in the removal of the Winnebago to the lands assigned to them. The following provisions conclude the treaty of 1837:

Fourth. To deliver to the chiefs and delegates on their arrival at St. Louis, goods and horses to the amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000); and, also, to deliver to them, as soon as practi-

cable after the ratification of this treaty, and at the expense of the United States goods to the amount of forty-seven thousand dollars (\$47,000).

Fifth. To deliver to them provisions to the amount of ten thousand dollars, (\$10,000); and horses to the same amount.

Sixth. To apply to the erection of a grist-mill, three thousand dollars, (\$3,000).

Seventh. To expend, in breaking up and fencing in ground, after the removal of the said Indians, ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

Eighth. To set apart the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to defray contingent and incidental expenses in the execution of this treaty, and the expenses of an exploring party, when the said Indians shall express a willingness to send one to the country southwest of the Missouri river.

Ninth. To invest the balance of the proceeds of the lands ceded in the first article of this treaty, amounting to eleven hundred thousand dollars (1,100,000,) and to guaranty to them an interest of not less than five per cent.

Of this interest amounting to fifty-five thousand dollars (\$55,000,) it is agreed the following disposition shall be made;

For purposes of education, twenty-eight hundred dollars (\$2,800).

For the support of an interpreter for the school, five hundred dollars, (\$500.)

For the support of a miller, six hundred dollars (\$600.)

For the supply of agricultural implements and assistance, five hundred dollars, (\$500.)

For medical services and medicines, six hundred dollars (\$600.)

The foregoing sums to be expended for the objects specified, for the term of twenty-two years, and longer at the discretion of the President. If at the expiration of that period, or any time thereafter, he shall think it expedient to discontinue either or all of the above allowances, the amount so discontinued shall be paid to the said Winnebago nation. The residue of the interest, amounting to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000,) shall be paid to said nation, in the following manner; Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in provisions, twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in goods, and twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in money.

ARTICLE 5th. It is understood and agreed that so much of the stipulations in existing treaties with said Winnebago nation, as

requires services to be performed, supplies furnished, or payments made, at designated times and places, shall be henceforth null and void; and those stipulations shall be carried into effect at such times and at such points in the country to which they are about to remove, as the President may direct.

ARTICLE 6th. This treaty to be binding on the contracting parties when it shall be ratified by the United States.

The above treaty was signed on November 1, 1837, by C. A. Harris and the following Winnebago chiefs and witnesses:

Watch-hat-ty-kah, (Big Boat,)
 Keesh-kee-pa-kah, (Kar-i-mo-nee,)
 Mo-ra-chay-kah, (Little Priest,)
 Ma-na-pay-kah, (Little Soldier,)
 Wa-kaun-ha-kah, (Snake Skin,)
 Ma-hee-koo-shay-nuz-he-kah,
 (Young Decori,)
 Wa-kun-cha-koo-kah, (Yellow
 Thunder,)
 Wa-kaun-kah, (The Snake,)
 Wa-kun-cha-nic-kah, (Little
 Thunder,)
 Nautch-kay-suck-kah, (Quick
 Heart,)
 Mai-ta-sha-hay-ma-ne-kah,
 (Young Kar-i-mo-nee,)
 Wa-kaun-ho-no-nic-kah, (Little
 Snake,)
 Hoong-kah, (Old Chief,)
 To-shun-uc-kah, (Little Otter,)
 Sho-go-nic-kah, (Little Hill,)
 Homp-ska-kah, (Fine Day,)
 Chow-walk-saih-e-nic, (The Plover,)
 Ah-oo-shush-kah, (Red Wing,)
 Shoog-hat-ty-kah, (Big Gun,)
 Ha-kah-kah, (Little Boy Child.)

In presence of Thos. A. B. Boyd, U. S. S. Ind. Ag't. N. Boilvin, Antoine Grignon, Jean Roy, Interpreters. Joseph Moore, J. Brisbois, Sat. Clark, jr., Conductors. Alexis Bailly. H. H. Sibley, Agent Am. Fur. Co. John Lowe. John M'Farlane. W. Gunton. T. R. Cruttenden. Charles E. Mix. A. R. Potts. Rd. L. Mackall.

To the Indian names are subjoined a mark.

SPEECH OF GOVERNOR HENRY DODGE

April 1840

My Winnebago children.

Your Great Father the President of the United States¹ has sent his War chief General Atkinson² to remove his children the Winnebagoes to their country west of the Mississippi. — I hope you will listen to his words that they will not pass in at one ear and out at the other but will sink deep in your hearts and be held in remembrance by you. — If you remove peaceably to your country you will comply with your treaty made at Washington with your Great Father who will protect you from the attacks of other Indians. You will go to a country that abounds in Deer and other game: — You will have troops stationed near you; and your good Father Mr Lowry, your Agent, will extend the hand of friendship to you and your children; he will live in your country near you where you will receive your annuities, from the United States: Your Great Father the President will hold you strong by the hand if you do right: the bright chain of friendship will remain unbroken and, the Winnebagoes may become a prosperous and happy people. — Should the Winnebagoes refuse to remove to their country they will forfeit their annuities and bring misery and misfortune on themselves, their women and children, and will be compelled by the War

¹ Martin Van Buren.

² Henry Atkinson was born in North Carolina in 1782. He entered the army on July 1, 1808, as a captain of the 3rd Infantry, and was made a colonel of the 45th Infantry on April 15, 1814. In 1819 Atkinson commanded the "Yellowstone expedition" up the Missouri past present-day Iowa. In September of that year (1840) he established camp Missouri, later Fort Atkinson and still later Fort Calhoun, a short distance above where Omaha now stands. On his return to St. Louis, Atkinson was made a Brigadier General. He selected the site for the historic post of Jefferson Barracks in 1826, and subsequently made it his home. Learning of a serious outbreak among the Winnebago in July of 1827, he hastened to Prairie du Chien and, by a swift concentration of troops, restored peace. General Atkinson was in general command of the troops during the Black Hawk War and was in immediate command on the second days' fight at Bad Axe.

In 1840, he supervised the earlier stages of the removal of the Winnebagoes from Wisconsin to the Neutral Ground in present-day Iowa. The following spring, on May 31, a post was established which was named Fort Atkinson in his honor. The documents contained herein reveal General Atkinson as a firm, courageous negotiator, who did not mince his words. He spent the remainder of his days at Jefferson Barracks where he died on June 14, 1842. Henry Atkinson was an outstanding general whose contributions to the conquest of the American frontier have been "equaled in importance by that of no contemporary with the possible exception of William Clarke."

Chief to remove from this side of the Mississippi — he has power from your Great Father to call as many men into the field as will oblige the Winnebagoes to comply with their treaty. — The war chief is kind to the Red skins but his duties will always be performed, he will have my aid and support to carry into effect his instructions from your Great Father — You have good and evil before you and the choice is left to yourselves — I have always been the friend of the Winnebagoes — I have never deceived them — I have held you strong by the hand — but if you refuse to comply with the wishes of the President of the United States, as expressed by his War chief all good men will be opposed to you and will unite to compel you to do right. — Let no evil advisers or bad men advise you to do wrong — do right that you may have a smooth road to travel and a clear sky to sleep under that the Great Spirit may be pleased with his red children the Winnebagoes.

(Signed) Henry Dodge³

COUNCIL HELD WITH THE WINNEBAGOES ON THE 1ST MAY 1840 AT PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

Gen. Atkinson opened the council by saying — I am glad to see the chiefs of the Winnebagoes here, and regret that Win-ne-shick⁴ and the

³ Henry Dodge was born at Post Vincennes in 1781. After a brief sojourn in Kentucky he moved to Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, where he was active in military and political affairs. In 1827, he removed to the lead mining area of southwestern Wisconsin. Henry Dodge was a colonel of the United States Dragoons and proved such an admirable soldier that President Andrew Jackson appointed him Governor of the newly-created Territory of Wisconsin in 1836. After Iowa was separated from Wisconsin in 1838, Henry Dodge continued as Governor. He was an able negotiator with the Indians and took a leading role in effecting the removal of the Winnebago from Wisconsin into the Neutral Ground in 1840. For further information see Louis Pelzer, *Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley* (SHSI, 1917) and Pelzer's *Henry Dodge* (SHSI, 1911). For a briefer account of his career see William J. Petersen, "Henry Dodge," in *The Palimpsest*, 19:41-49.

⁴ Winneshiek County is named for this Winnebago Chief. His true Indian name, according to A. R. Fulton, was *Wau-kon-chaw-koo-kah*, or Yellow Thunder. His name appears as *Wau-kaun-tshaw-zee-kaw* on the Treaty of 1829 and as *Wa-Kun-cha-koo-kah* on the Treaty of 1837. Because he had joined Black Hawk he apparently was not permitted to sign the Treaty of 1832. According to Fulton: "Both physically and intellectually he was a remarkably fine specimen of his race. He was above the medium height, finely proportioned, easy and graceful in his manner, and was indeed the most accomplished and handsome man in the tribe. As a man he was modest, kind and courteous; as a chief, dignified, firm and just in the exercise of his authority. . . . In the transaction of business with the government of the

one eyed De-cor-ree⁵ are absent — I was anxious to meet them here. I am glad to learn that you are willing to emigrate across the Mississippi in accordance with the stipulations of yr last treaty with the United States — I have been sent here by yr great Father to explain to you, what is to yr interest — I have read the treaty over carefully, and find it very advantageous to you — I shall erect a Military Post⁶ at a Point which will be hereafter selected on Turkey river, and place a sufficient number of troops there for your protection. In a day or two I shall send out a party, to examine the Country and select a site, and am desirous that you should select some one in whom you repose confidence, to accompany that party, — Your Great Father has sent a large and ample supply of provisions here for your use — You have seen at Painted Rock a large steam-Boat loaded with provisions for you. — There is now another lying at the landing, which will be sent to Painted Rock⁷ to discharge its freight.

I am extremely sorry to hear that some of the chiefs of the Portage bands⁸ have expressed an unwillingness to come and go over also — They shall not receive a pound of the provisions or a dollar of the money allowed them by Government, until they do come down and cross the river

United States he was suspicious, obstinate and faithless. As a politician he was crafty and cautious; as a warrior, brave in battle, and calm and self-reliant in danger. From his childhood he cherished a feeling of hostility toward the Americans, and twice took up arms against them."

⁵ The town of Decorah in Winneshiek County is named for this Winnebago chief. Fulton calls him Waukon-Decorah, meaning "White Snake." His name appears on the Treaty of 1825 as *De-ca-ri*. It does not appear on the treaties of 1829, 1832, and 1837. His son, Young Decori (One-Eyed Decorah), does appear on the Treaty of 1837 spelled *Ma-bee-koo-shay-nuz-he-kah*. According to Fulton: "Waukon-Decorah was the patriarch of the tribe, and in 1842, was described as being much bent by reason of his age, and as walking with a feeble and tottering step. He was a man of small stature, being only about five feet in height. At the date last mentioned he was about eighty-one years old, and was then quite bald, having only a few long gray locks falling from the sides and back part of his head. When he visited Washington it was remarked that he bore a striking resemblance to Stephen Girard, the once great Philadelphia banker."

Waukon-Decorah was friendly to the whites. After the removal of the Winnebago into Iowa he set up his village near the present town of Decorah on the Upper Iowa River. His remains were interred in the public square at Decorah.

⁶ Fort Atkinson (1840-1848) now being restored in part by the State Conservation Commission.

⁷ At the mouth of the Yellow River about six miles above Prairie du Chien.

⁸ Fort Winnebago (1828-1845) was located where the Wisconsin and Fox rivers approach each other at present-day Portage, Wisconsin.

— and if they persist in not doing it — the provisions and the money shall be given to those who do cross the river.

It is my wish that you should understand distinctly what I say in reference to the portage Indians.

I shall use all means in my power to make them go over peaceably, and shall resort to force only at the last extremity — It would pain my heart much to use force against your brothers up there — But I have been ordered to move them — and go they must if they wont go peaceably I shall use force & make them go — I have nothing more to say just now after you have spoken. I shall have a talk to make to Dandy to carry talk to the Portage Indians — I want you to send and advise yr brothers to emigrate — It would be painful and troublesome to send a large military force, also mounted militia up there to make them — It would be extremely distressing to their families

*Gull*⁹ — Father, & Brothers we are glad to shake hands with you this beautifull day the Great Spirit has made for us — Father we have heard all yr words — To yr talk we cannot give any direct answer, for as you remark all our chiefs are not in council — Before we met you to day we have heard the words you have spoken to us — We remember distinctly all that our Great Father has ever spoken or written to us — We have heard you, Father, speak frequently — We have had two great talks with you in this place — We remember what you said in those talks — since then we have been to see our Great Father and have heard the words spoken from his own mouth — But after hearing those talks and the talk of our Great Father we are unable to understand yr talk this evening — When we were in council, you shoke us by the hand — and said you pitied us much — and that our Great Father would do every thing in his power to help us — When we were about to leave our Great Father he told us — Go home and take care of yr families — And that he hoped he would never hear any thing bad of us nor we of him — The chiefs of our nation heard their great Father talk with pleasure, returned to their vil-lages, and told it to their people all were glad to hear it — Since then our Great Father has never heard any thing bad from the Winnebagoes — they have never done any thing which should make him change his course

⁹ *Gull*, or *Gule*, appears to be a newcomer among the Winnebago orators who apparently was not active in previous treaties.

towards them — Our Great Father then said, return to yr villages, and remain there for thirty years — I will send yr annuities to you — although we cannot read or write we recollect the words of our Great Father — you who can read must recollect them —

Gen Atkinson — Tell Dandy I understand he is a great orator, and wish him to speak freely, and say what is his opinion and that of his villages —

Dandy¹⁰ — Father we shake hands today in friendship — I have been wishing to see you for some time — You have heard me speak before — I have a strong voice although small body — Since a boy I have spoken much — The Great Spirit has given me a strong voice reason why I speak so loud — Father you have come a long way to talk with us, our young men & old men have also come a long way — We will have a long and a good talk to morrow — Neither you nor my Great Father has ever heard any thing bad of me —

Gen Atkinson — I am sorry to hear, Dandy, that when in council with your agent Mr. Lowery¹¹ at Fort Winnebago, Lellow Thunder¹² and yrself expressed a determination not to come here, to hold a council — I was sorry to hear it — The words your Great Father sent to me were full of peace — if you went over quietly — Looking over the treaty I find the names of Yellow Thunder and little Soldier affixed to it — Yr great father will be much surprised to find that the very men who made the treaty are now unwilling to comply with it. Yr great Father in telling me to take you over quietly — has also said if you refuse to go I must make you go — I am not permitted to exercise any discretion — You have got sense enough to understand what my duty is — I have already collected together some troops here, and, if the Portage Indians do not

¹⁰ Dandy, whose Indian name was Waw-pa-no-dah, throughout his life was an implacable foe of the Americans. In 1825 he had been a ringleader in stirring up hostilities against the whites. He was still doing it in 1840 and he proved equally obstinate in the removal of the Winnebago from Iowa in 1848. He was the recognized orator among the Winnebago in matters of policy but seldom appeared among the whites.

¹¹ Reverend David Lowry, a Presbyterian minister, was appointed by President Andrew Jackson as a teacher for the Winnebago. He arrived in Prairie du Chien in 1834 and opened the school the following year. He conducted a Winnebago Indian school near the mouth of the Yellow River and later near Fort Atkinson in Winneshiek County.

¹² Yellow Thunder, *Wau-kon-chaw-koo-kah*, or Winneshiek.

come in I shall go up to Fort Winnebago, — If they do not then come in — I shall call upon my Brother here, Gov Dodge for some of his people and will hunt them up — I shall also give orders that they shall not receive any of the provisions or annuities — they may depend upon it — as sure as there is a Great Spirit above — When the time came for them to move last year they said they were not ready. Yr Great Father indulged them until now — He will indulge them no longer — Take the words I have spoken back to yr people — Tell them if they persist in their determination — and wish to starve their women and children — the suffering and distress that will ensue — and the blood that will flow will be upon their own heads, not mine — The goods and provisions that came for them last year are now in a storehouse here for them, when they come down — They will also get their proportion of the provisions that have just come — provided they emigrate — If they compel me I will fill that country with troops, and hunt them up in every corner and hole — I speak the truth not to frighten you — but that you may tell yr people — You have heard me speak before, and have never — heard me speak any thing but the truth —

I have sent for a deputation of Sauk and expect them soon — I wish you to make up the quarrel now existing between you I shall station Dragoons in yr new Country and hope you will have no further difficulties with them — Your Great Father has appointed Mr. Lowery your agent — he is a good man and holds council with the Great Spirit — He prays for the Red Man as well as the white man — In yr Council to night I wish you to fix upon some one to accompany Mr Lowery and some officers whom I will send to fix upon a site for a Post — I wish you to select a place to settle upon —

Gull — You have spoken of the Sauk difficulties, to-morrow we will tell you upon what conditions we will make peace —

Gen Atkinson — I wish you to see the Sauk chiefs and arrange it with them —

Gull — We have nothing to say to them, and do not see what they can possibly have to say to us —

Council on 2nd of May —

Gen. Atkinson — Ask Gull if he told Win-no-shick of the talk I gave him yesterday —

Answer — Yes —

Gen Atkinson — you have slept upon what I said yesterday, and were to inform me this morning what you thought of it — I am now ready to hear you — Gov Dodge, your agent & myself act together, if you speak to me on any subject you speak to all — Your great Father at Washington sent me here & directed me to call upon Gov Dodge and yr agent to act with me — When you speak I wish only to speak about what relates to the last treaty, and not as you did yesterday — Go back a number of years — Speak as soon as you are ready —

Gull — We promised yesterday to give a positive answer to day — Yesterday you said whatever you might say to us was the truth and we will speak nothing but the truth to day — Some of you have heard me say before that I am no chief — I am a warrior, a brave man, my fathers were all war chiefs, none peace chiefs, like the chiefs in this council — You tell us to speak of things since 37 — We intend doing so — I shall now repeat a part of what I said yesterday — That when he saw his great Father time before the last, he said he pitied us very much, we were very weak — He was very strong — He wished now to speak in relation to one subject brought before them yesterday — The others would answer questions, — Father, you know Indians are accustomed to make long talk be patient and do not get tired of hearing us — Father, when we saw our Great Father, he said whenever one white man killed another, the life of the murderer was always taken — and he told us whenever one red man killed another, he would always protect the injured — He said, "I have taken the tomahawk from you and buried it deep — and I will punish the first who takes it up severely — Father — the Winnebagoes remembered the words of their Great Father — have obeyed them, and have never taken up the tomahawk — It still remains buried where our Great Father buried it — but one has been taken up against us — Now for the fulfillment of the promise of our Great Father — our Great Father has certainly before this heard of the murders, and learned the names of the Indians who perpetrated them — You, father, know how many times we have suffered before — our women were killed on an Island in sight of the Fort — others were killed on Turkey river in sight of white settlements — After our women were first murdered — our Great Father sent the pipe to us — several nations were present — peace was made — and our Great Father said whatever nation first broke that peace should be like the ashes from our pipes

—scattered to the winds — It has been only ten years since peace was thus made — Gov Dodge was present at the time — murders have been again committed & the Sauk Indians should now suffer — Our agent wrote to our great Father about it — he answered — He pitied us much — We expect to hear something more from our great Father today through you

Gen. Atkinson — Sufficient time has not yet elapsed, for an account of the murders to go, on to Washington, and yr great Father to write to me —

Gull Father we would like to know how our Great Father would wish us to settle our difficulties with the Sauk — we have already made peace several times, and it has been as often broken —

Gen. Atkinson — I cannot say until I hear from yr great Father

Gull — Father you said yesterday you had sent for the Sauk chiefs — They make very good speeches — we have heard them frequently — we will listen to you on the subject — but we do not wish to see the Sauks —

Gen. Atkinson — If when the Sauks arrive you do not wish to see them — I will send them back —

Gull — Glad to hear from Great Father on the subject — but we cannot believe any thing the Sacs say —

Gen. Atkinson Sacs bad men, and tell a great many lies —

Gull — We will wait to hear from our Great Father until the middle of summer — after that we will shut our ears — Before I sit down I would like to say one word to our father, — Gov Dodge — Father we have heard you speak frequently, & listen to you with pleasure — Some few years since you said to us you would like to borrow some of our young men — now we wish to borrow some of yours — I have nearly finished — when I have finished — The chiefs will answer questions, put yesterday — You Father (Gen Atkinson) say — that the Sac war party was from the Black Hawk band — we have heard you speak frequently pleasure — and as soon as you hear from Great Father we would like to hear what he has to say —

Gen. Atkinson — If the Sacs dont satisfy you by the middle of summer — Satisfy yr selves — Tis not my wish to tie up yr hands.

Gull — Our Great Father has no more obedient children than the Win-

nebagoes — and we think he ought to listen to our words at least once. If this difficulty is not settled before long we will have to raise the tomahawk, or if we cannot raise it — we will dare to make another — Father we will wait till middle of Summer if peace is not then made — we will try something else —

*Whirling Thunder*¹³ — The Great Spirit has permitted me to live many days — I am old, you must not expect to hear much from me — Before your war [Black Hawk War] with the Sacs — you had a council with the Winnebagoes, and there take me by the hand — and said you would always be my friend — That day you said — go to your country across the Mississippi, there is plenty of game there, and no one shall harm you — Contrary to our expectations our people have been murdered — Father in the beginning I said I would not say much — I am crying for my children that have been killed — Father we think as much of our children, as our Great Father does of his — and we dislike very much to see their scalps taken — I have finished, and whatever our young men say to day, you may rely upon its being an answer of the nation to yr questions of yesterday

*Little Priest*¹⁴ — The Great Spirit has willed we should meet in council to day — you will hear now what our chiefs think of the questions put yesterday — We talked about them for a long time last night — The chiefs of nearly all the bands are present in council — Father Great Spirit has given us land to place our villages upon — we believe that the great Spirit intended our villages to be sacred — and that when he first placed the Winnebagoes there he told them to live there and expected them to live there. Father ever since we first saw you — you know we have always listened to you with pleasure. The Great Spirit knows all things — He hears us now and provides for the Indians as well as for the white men — Father we have always heard yr words with pleasure — and have never disobeyed any, never thought of doing so — we have listened to you both in council with pleasure. As beautiful a day as it is — there is a cloud in at least

¹³ Whirling Thunder, whose Indian name was spelled *Wau-kaun-tshaw-way-kee-wen-kaw* in the Treaty of 1829, spelled it *Wau-kaun-ween-kaw* in the Treaty of 1832. His name does not appear in the Treaty of 1837.

¹⁴ Little Priest's name was spelled *Mo-rah-tshay-kaw* in the Treaty of 1832 and *Mo-ra-chay-kah* in the Treaty of 1837. He and Whirling Thunder were from the Rock River Winnebago deputations. When they moved into Iowa they set up their villages about fifteen miles west of the Winnebago school.

one quarter hanging over the Winnebagoes — Many years ago when on Rock river our friend Gov Dodge came — We like him then — and we still like him — He then said the Winnebagoes had a large place in his heart. — Two women had been taken by the Red men I brought them to him — He said he would always be my friend — we made peace — He said if it ever should be broken — must call upon him — Our Great Father once said that he held the hearts of his children together with a long string — if [it] was ever broken must complain to him — Our Father Gov Dodge shook hands with me then, and said he had but one heart one tongue — and that it must be so with me — we believed him — still do — When we saw our Great Father in Washington we repeated the same words to him — and our Great Father promised if any one injured us to protect us — When last to see our Great Father some one in house said we could not see him — but said to us in substance what our Great Father had said to us before — He also said that our Great Father thought a great deal of the Winnebagoes — He then related the circumstances of the two women having been taken from the Sacs — and said that alone would always give the Winnebagoes a large place in his heart — Father we suppose you have come here to day in council, to wish us to live long and be a happy people — I have one request to make of you to day, Father, and as you have always expressed a great deal of affection for me — you will, I know, grant it — It will not give you much trouble although it will be a great favor to me —

My heart is much pained from one circumstance, which you are aware of (one of his relatives had killed a man) when annuities come — I wish a box of money to settle it with — With reference Father to what you said yesterday, dont see why you wish me to go farther already west of the Mississippi near Turkey river — This is the best answer I can give to yr question — The other chiefs will now talk — One of our great chiefs Yellow Thunder is absent — I am sorry for it —

Gen. Atkinson then had that portion of the treaty by which the Indians promised not to locate their villages in the neutral ground nearer than twenty miles to the river explained to them — and said — I will send troops out on Turkey river to protect the Winnebagoes — They shall not be again injured by the Sacs if I can prevent it, if I catch any of the Sacs in yr country I will have them confined

Dandy — Show our hands to you, shake hands with great Spirit and our great Father — In council to day you may expect to hear what the Winnebagoes think — Father — I have a small body — am a small Indian, have a small heart — you see our bodies are not of the same colour as yours — The Great Spirit hears us talk — He has given us but one heart — one tongue — We speak like men before the Great Spirit — Father — you have seen me when small — long been accustomed to speaking — I speak much and no one has ever heard a bad word from me — Brothers — I have always tried to do what our Great Father wished me to do, have always done what he told me to do — Most of the head men at the [council] fires at the Portage are here — you hear nothing bad from any of them — Father — what I say to day I wish to say before the Great Spirit, who is not so far off, but that he can hear us — You all know that some years since I did much for yr people — We have heard of the difficulties of our Brothers here — we have taken no part in them not even looked their way — Our Great Father knows all the Portage chiefs well — Father, as you have heard this morning our Great Father has said when ever any of our limbs are cut off they shall be well covered up — Father, I intend doing every thing Great Father wishes me to do — I always have — We do not believe it is the wish of the Great Spirit that our limbs should be cut off — Our Great Father desires to carry out the wishes of the Great Spirit — We think much of our Father Gov. Dodge — from yr talk we fear that you have torn up many papers — We recollect well all we have ever heard — from our Fathers — we always speak the truth, and do not wish to lose any of the words — You have heard me say before I was a day[?] man I have painted my medal blue like the Sky — Father what we have heard at Washington we do not wish to be lost — Produces papers which he wishes read — we have another book which we wish you to see The book of the Great Spirit —

Gen. Atkinson — You say you have a small body and loud voice — You have been talking a long time and said nothing about what is before the council — You have a small body and it sounds very loud like an empty barrel — You have been talking about yr own deeds, and nothing about the treaty — I wish to know whether you & the chiefs are going to comply with the treaty or not — There are now two of yr chiefs present who signed that treaty Decori [Decorah] & Kar-im-onee —

Dandy — The great spirit placed us at the villages we are now occupying — do not know whether they can be removed or not — we will talk about it now — We fear our Great Father says a great many different words to us not so with great Spirit — The Great Spirit hears our words, we wish our Great Father to hear them also — Our Great Father wishes our villages removed although we think much of the places where they now are — They can be removed — This is what I think — There is one thing which you must acknowledge is in our way —

Gen. Atkinson — I must have a positive answer to the question put — Do yr people intend complying with the Treaty or not —

Dandy — Father I have answered it before We will move to where two rivers come together on the other side of the Mississippi — That is the place we have fixed upon — We do not wish to fight. Some of our people talk of fighting —

Gen. Atkinson — You must go farther the treaty must be complied with — You are now the richest Indian nation — & I will not listen to one word on the subject — How can your Great Father believe one word you say now — Do you remember a talk you had with Gov. Dodge — in which you promise[d] to go this Spring — Now you talk about staying here — Is this the language men should use — Is it talking like men, like brave men — I believe Dandy you have a part in persuading these not to go — Dont believe yr heart is good, you have just said that yr heart is small (then [General Atkinson] repeats what he said yesterday about provisions and the annuities) If the chiefs still persist in not going — the blood that must flow will be upon their own heads not mine — Yr friend Gov. Dodge will now talk to you —

Gov. Dodge — Gov. Dodge then remarked that he had always been [in] the habit of talking to them without reducing his talk to writing but considering this a very important talk he had put it in writing (a copy of it will be found at the end of these proceedings)

Dandy — I have nothing different to say now from what I said before — The place I spoke of I thought I could persuade the Indians to go to — It is not so far.

Gen Atkinson — I will make them go —

Dandy — You may depend upon my doing all I can — The Indians would prefer coming on their horses to coming in canoes — I cannot persuade Rock river Indians —

Gen. Atkinson — Tell them I am no child their great Father relies upon me, and that I will do all he expects of me —

Gen Atkinson. Explains to them by the map where he wishes to locate the new Post & why —

Win-a-chick — Father — the land we are now upon belongs to our great Father — He has sent you here to move us, and I presume at yr request we must go — Father, I am now on the other side of the river — I wish to remain where I am now, and cultivate my fields — until our Brothers from above come down, and then go along with them — This I think, a reasonable request, and wish it granted —

Gen Atkinson — Granted — one crop — I am a great friend of the Winnebagoes and do not wish to do any thing to inconvenience them — But I am obliged to carry that treaty into effect — Dandy — how many men, women & children are there at the Portage — How would the bands like to move themselves and I pay them so much a head for it —

Dandy — rather have it that way — I request that Mr Tibbits will be employed to help us to move.

Gen Atkinson — Mr. Tibbits,¹⁵ Mr. Clarke¹⁶ & Capt Stone¹⁷ will all be employed —

Dandy — We also wish our Blacksmith to accompany us — and the house that was built for the agent at Fort Winnebago should be sold, and the money given to us —

Gen. Atkinson — I will consult with yr Great Father about it —

Dandy — We also want the cattle at the portage sold —

Gen. Atkinson — yr agent will want them to break up the land on the other side of the river —

Dandy — Our Great Father has to send the money a long way to make

¹⁵ Mr. Tibbits apparently was a minor government employee.

¹⁶ Joseph Moore, J. Brisbois, and Sat. Clark, jr. were designated "Conductors" at the treaty of 1837.

¹⁷ Probably a local resident with militia rank.

our payments — and some of the money has been lost, we do not suspect any of you — But the money has been lost — we understand that some of it had been lost in the water —

Gen. Atkinson — You chose yr own agents and if any of it has been lost — It has been by them — and it will probably be the case until you emigrate and are all paid at the same time —

Dandy — When our agent came to see us last summer he told us to make our corn &c the difficulties would be settled — When our agent came to see us last fall — he promised to have our goods etc there for us this summer —

Gen. Atkinson — I will not permit him to comply with his promise — Come here and you will receive yr goods —

Dandy — We think much of our friends — Mr. Dousman,¹⁸ Clarke & Capt Lou — and wish to have them always with us —

Gen. Atkinson — If you come down at once, I will furnish you all with provisions — to subsist yrselfes with on the road — and give you three dollars a-head little & big —

Dandy — At the last payments at the Portage some of the Indians — were absent — and the money for them was left in the hands of Capt Smith¹⁹ — we wish our friend Mr. Tibbits to get it for us —

Council then adjourned & met again in the evening —

Gen. Atkinson — I am here agreable to yr request to hear what you have to say —

Dandy — When I say any thing if they who repeat it, do not exactly what I say — tis not my faults — When I saw our agent last summer at

¹⁸ Hercules L. Dousman was associated with the American Fur Company and doubtless was well-represented by his partner, Henry Hastings Sibley, at the Treaty of 1837. The Dousman home at Prairie du Chien is one of the historic shrines and showplaces in the Upper Mississippi Valley, as is the Sibley home at Mendota, opposite Fort Snelling.

¹⁹ The identity of this officer is not clear. There are two hundred and ninety-four Smiths recorded in Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*. This compilation does not include the militia or men masquerading under pseudo-military titles.

Winnebago, he told me to come down to see you and Gov Dodge, and then I should return with plenty of goods & provisions — These were the words of the agent — his son was the interpreter — and there certainly is an untruth somewhere — You know how destitute we are — men and women without blankets — also we have not all got canoes — some will have to come by land — and will want guns to subsist themselves with —

Gen. Atkinson — I have told you twenty times that you shall have nothing until you come down, and it is useless to speak about it — if you have nothing else to speak about — it is useless to talk — so soon as you come down you shall have provisions and goods — not before — I have told the agent he must not issue any to you — and if he did promise he shall not comply with his promise — Blame me, not the agent —

Dandy — We wish to start early in the morning for home —

Whirling Thunder — I hope you will be patient and hear us a little while longer — We wish another interpreter to send our talks to Great Father —

Little Priest — You said this morning you wished us to speak about nothing except what related to the last treaty —

We want another interpreter, our great Father promised we might have who we pleased for our interpreter — We all like our agent Mr. Lowery very much — he is a good man — Our great father promised that we might select two interpreters from among our friends — Mr. Dousman is a good friend to the Winnebagoes — and gives blankets to their young men — we wish an interpreter for him —

Gen. Atkinson — I will send yr talk to yr Great Father —

Little Priest — Great Father promised that he would give us blacksmiths, farmers & medicine when we wished — if sent word to him through our agent — we have one good interpreter, but we want another — to travel about with us — We want Antoine Grignon appointed interpreter —

Gen. Atkinson — Cant promise — will send yr talk to yr Great Father — Dandy, I shall expect you to go back and commence moving with yr people in about three weeks —

Needless to say, after such a firm stand on the part of General Atkinson, the Winnebago began to move over into the ground agreed upon in the

Treaty of 1837. Before two months had expired the bulk of the tribe was located in Iowa leaving only a few stragglers to be rounded up by United States troops. Their sojourn in Iowa was destined to be a short one. Six years later the Winnebago once more signed a treaty whereby they agreed to move into what is now Minnesota far beyond the Falls of St. Anthony. Once more the recalcitrant red men were loathe to move and it was not until 1848 that the colorful exodus finally was consummated.²⁰

²⁰ The following references on the Winnebago will prove valuable to the reader: Walter H. Beall, *The Teggarden Massacre*, *Palimpsest*, 24:82-91, March, 1943. A. R. Fulton, *The Red Men of Iowa*, 146-162, Des Moines, 1882. Bruce E. Mahan, *Old Fort Crawford and the Frontier*, 100-119, 140-161, 201-240. SHSI. 1926. William J. Petersen, "The Winnebago Indians," *The Palimpsest*, 41:325-356, July, 1960.