

The
PALIMPSEST



Keokuk Mounted on His Horse

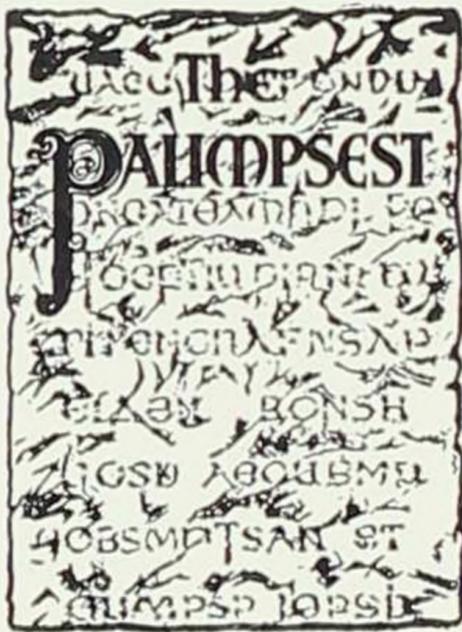
Keokuk—The Watchful Fox

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The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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WILLIAM J. PETERSEN	

Illustrations

Front Cover:—Artist George Catlin declared: "He [Keokuk] is a man of a great deal of pride, and makes truly a splendid appearance on his black horse. He owns the finest horse in the country, and is excessively vain of his appearance when mounted, and arrayed, himself and horse, in all their gear and trappings. He expressed a wish to see himself represented on horseback, and I painted him in that plight. He rode and nettled his prancing steed in front of my door, until its sides were in a gore of blood. I succeeded to *his* satisfaction, and his vanity is increased, no doubt, by seeing himself immortalized in that way."

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This is a reprint of articles appearing in the February, 1935, and July, 1958, issues of THE PALIMPSEST. The illustrations have been added.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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The Watchful Fox

Written grandly in the annals of early Iowa is the name of Keokuk. As a chief of the Sacs he stands out preëminently among all the leaders of that powerful tribe, rivalled only by Black Hawk. Intelligent, crafty, cautious, and vain, Keokuk was always alert in his own interests. In contrast, Black Hawk was outright, scorning affectation and deceit, patriotic, and bold — qualities of character not to be found in the Watchful Fox. Black Hawk was the man of war, looking longingly at the hills and valleys of his youth, fighting for his people and their heritage, and losing his fight all the way. Keokuk was the man of guile, the talker, achieving his ends and high rank by dint of words and scheming. A man with a persuasive tongue was Keokuk, an orator unsurpassed in a tribe that was famous for the eloquence of its chiefs, adroit, convincing, always projecting new and devious ways of accomplishing results to his own advantage. He looked into the face of the wind and cut and reefed his sails accordingly.

Keokuk was born at Saukenuk, near Rock Island, about 1780. His mother is said to have been a half-breed, the daughter of a French trader. Not a chief by birth, since he belonged to a non-ruling gens, Keokuk rose to that position through his ability in politics and his happy faculty of always putting the best foot forward on public occasions. His name, Kiyokag in the Sac language, meaning "one who moves about alert," is descriptive of his early youth. He watched for opportunities and seized every advantage.

While still young he was permitted to attend the tribal councils. Later he was made tribal guest-keeper. This was his first step forward. Supplied with every means of rendering hospitality for the tribe, and at tribal expense, Keokuk played the genial host to perfection. His lodge soon became the center of the social and political life of the tribe. With this advantage he built his political fences rapidly and well.

The social organization and traditions of the tribe provided many barriers to the ambitious Keokuk, but he did not permit this to deter him. He set himself against the rigid customs and ironclad taboos of his tribe, not openly and aggressively, but quietly, unpretentiously, diplomatically. A veiled attack being his method, he stood always in the background playing one faction against another. As time passed he became the leading councillor in the Sac assembly.

At an early date he perceived that it was futile to oppose the power and strength of the white men, so he veered his own course accordingly. Always he curried the white man's favor. When the settlers began to crowd the Indians out of their beloved village of Saukenuk, Keokuk accepted the advice of the traders and willingly moved across the Mississippi to the Iowa country, as Poweshiek and the Foxes had done long before. Peace at any price he counted better than war with the whites. With some of the warriors he lost prestige, but most of the tribe followed him to the new village on the Iowa River. The more belligerent faction turned to Black Hawk for leadership. Thus the Sacs who had dwelt together in harmony longer than they could remember were hopelessly divided.

The decisive contest for leadership of the united tribe occurred in the war council at Keokuk's village in April, 1832. Black Hawk with his band of three hundred braves came with plans for a great Indian confederacy capable of driving the settlers out of the Mississippi Valley. The venerable chief urged his fellow tribesmen to take up their tomahawks and go on the warpath to avenge the wrongs of their people. Under the influence of the war dance and the spell of his patriotism, the warriors rallied to the cause, and it seemed for the moment that the will of Black Hawk would prevail. Then Keokuk spoke. In a few words he won the attention of the war-bent braves, and then

swiftly, adroitly, and with matchless skill he painted such a terrible picture of tribal sacrifices that the warriors who had been most clamorous for war sat silent and abashed. The glory of battle and revenge had suddenly faded. Keokuk was master of the situation, Black Hawk the discredited rival. The old chief's courage and tribal loyalty were no match for the younger man's diplomacy and eloquence.

Too proud to face the humiliation of accepting the dominance of Keokuk and too courageous to be deterred by fatal consequences, Black Hawk led his little band of warriors on the warpath. Meanwhile, Keokuk hastened to Fort Armstrong to assure the authorities of his own friendship. Deftly he played the part of a faithful ally. While Black Hawk fought for the ancient home of his people, Keokuk followed the wiser but less noble policy of peaceful submission to the purpose of a stronger race. And when the war was over, when Black Hawk's band had been almost wiped out and Black Hawk himself was a prisoner, Keokuk was in a position to assume the unchallenged leadership of his tribe. His formal recognition as high chief of the Sacs and Foxes was made the final act of the long drama of his struggle for supremacy, and to the very end Keokuk played the rôle of the shrewd and subtle schemer that he was.

The Sacs and Foxes had assembled at Fort Armstrong. Keokuk was there, confident and dig-

nified as became a big chief. Black Hawk was there, a prisoner of war, defeated and humbled before his own people, yet willing to accept his fate. After the assembled chiefs and warriors had listened attentively to the greetings of Major John Garland and President Jackson's speech to Black Hawk in Baltimore had been read, Keokuk answered in a happy vein, speaking of new days, new friends, and a new nation moving forward in peace and contentment.

Major Garland then arose again and announced that the Great Father in Washington would from that time on acknowledge Keokuk as the principal chief of the Sacs and Foxes and that he wished Black Hawk to consent to that plan. Black Hawk, upon hearing the interpreted version of these remarks, got the impression that the President had said he must conform to the counsels of Keokuk. That was too much for the proud spirit of Black Hawk to bear. Springing to his feet, agitated, trembling with rage, he spoke in his old imperious manner.

I am a man — an old man. I will not conform to the counsels of any one. I will act for myself; no one shall govern me. I am old; my hair is gray. I once gave counsel to my young men. Am I to conform to others? I shall soon go to the Great Spirit where I shall be at rest. What I said to our great father at Washington, I say again. I will always listen to him. I am done.

A great furore was caused by these words

wrung from the heart of the old chief. He had made peace with the government, but he had not supposed that he would be made a ward of Keokuk. In vain the interpreter tried to explain. At last Keokuk arose and turning to the deposed chief, he spoke as though admonishing a child.

Why do you speak so before the white men? I will speak for you. You trembled; you did not mean what you said.

Then, addressing the council, he continued.

Our brother who has again come to us has spoken, but he spoke in wrath; his tongue was forked; he spoke not like a man or a Sac. He knew his words were bad. He trembled like the oak whose roots have been wasted by many rains. He is old; what he said let us forget. I have spoken for him. What I have said are his own words — not mine. Let us say he spoke in council to-day — that his words were good. I have spoken.

What a consummate politician! In the realm of achieving his own ambitions Keokuk had no equal among the Indians. And the principal factor of his success was his eloquence. He had a marvelous faculty of saying precisely the right thing at the right time. He spoke rapidly, dramatically, and with great intensity. Word pictures, richly colored and highly imaginative, flowed easily from his lips. His eyes glowed, his whole being became animated as he threw himself into his discourse. Possessing a rich, powerful voice, his enunciation was particularly good so that not a syllable was lost to the listener. On his trip east in 1837 he

spoke before thousands and in every case his dignity of bearing and mastery of the situation made a striking and profound impression on his audiences. He was compared favorably with Webster, Calhoun, and other orators of the day.

But Keokuk was not merely a politician and an orator. He was more than that; he was a warrior. Though reason and expediency made him friendly toward the whites, his early life was full of heroic exploits against the Sioux. Keokuk was a strong, active man, of medium height and well-knit. As a youth he excelled in the various feats of strength, speed, and endurance practiced by his people. In horsemanship and dancing he was particularly proficient. Indeed, Keokuk might be dubbed "the man on horseback." He loved fine horses and always owned the best mount and richest accoutrement obtainable on the border. George Catlin, who painted Keokuk on horseback, attests to that. "The horse that he rode was the best animal on the frontier; a fine blooded horse for which he gave the price of 300 dollars, a thing that he was quite able to, who had the distribution of 50,000 dollar annuities, annually, amongst his people. His horse was beautifully caparisoned." And he could ride his horse. Incident after incident might be related of the superb horsemanship of Keokuk.

In his first battle, when he was scarcely more than a boy, he killed a Sioux warrior with a spear. The exploit was given conspicuous notice by his

fellows because both he and his victim were on horseback at the time and since the Sioux were preëminently the horsemen of the plains, the Sacs looked upon the deed as an extraordinary achievement. A feast was prepared in honor of the event. Keokuk was elevated to the rank of a brave at once and granted all the rights of manhood, though still a youth. As an appropriate distinction he was permitted to appear on horseback on all public occasions thereafter. This unique honor Keokuk enjoyed until his death. Even though the rest of the tribe were afoot in processions or ceremonials, Keokuk might ride, and Keokuk did ride, alone and proudly among his people.

Despite his policy of peace, Keokuk had hot blood in his veins, and could give a good account of himself on the warpath if necessary, though that was not his favorite method. The way to get things done in his opinion was by using ingenuity, not war-clubs. But if necessity demanded, the war-club was not to be ignored. Many incidents in his earlier career attest the truth of this statement. Always, though, it was against the red man, not the white, that his weapons were used.

Much mention is made of an incident that occurred when Keokuk and a small band were on a hunting trip near the borders of the Sioux country. A large band of Sioux, mounted and prepared for war, came suddenly upon them. The Sacs, surprised and outnumbered, were prepared to lose

their scalps, but Keokuk, undaunted, took command of the situation. Instructing his braves to form a circle, dismount, and shoot from behind the shelter of their horses, he saved the day. Again and again the Sioux charged the entrenched Sacs, but to no avail. Finally, giving it up as a bad job, they withdrew from the scene, defeated. This battle increased Keokuk's reputation for valor as a warrior and ability as a leader.

On another occasion, while with a party of braves on the northern prairies hunting buffalo, he came upon a party of Sioux, painted and prepared for war. His village being unprotected during the time of the hunt, Keokuk surmised that it was the object of their expedition. Outnumbered and unprepared for battle, Keokuk realized that only strategy could save his people. While the enemy was engaged in a war dance and all was hubbub in their camp, Keokuk, astride his fastest pony, rode furiously into their very midst. Demanding to see their chief he said: "I have come to let you know that there are traitors in your camp. They have told me that you are preparing to attack my village. I know that they told me lies, for you could not, after smoking the pipe of peace, be so base as to murder my women and children in my absence. None but the cowards would be guilty of such conduct."

The Sioux, caught by surprise, looked upon him with open-mouthed amazement and then crowded

around him, threateningly. In a loud voice and with bold gesture, Keokuk continued: "I suppose they told me lies, but if what I have heard is true, then the Sacs are ready for you." Turning quickly, just as the Sioux were about to throw themselves on him, Keokuk dashed to safety. Back in his own village he and his party awaited the attack which did not come.

Even as a warrior, bold and valiant though he was, he resorted to diplomacy whenever it served his purpose. He saw no advantage in risking his life in combat if his wits could save him. Yet he was no coward, as his action demonstrates. He was simply the wily, calculating strategist, a dangerous foe in the field as well as a formidable antagonist at the council fire or in the forum.

At the end of the Black Hawk War the object for which Keokuk had been aiming for so many years was at last achieved. He was formally recognized by the government as the supreme chief of the confederated tribes of Sacs and Foxes. This arrangement was not received with much favor by the Indians, particularly the Foxes, who had been gradually drawing away from the Sacs. Keokuk's regime served to widen the breach rather than to close it. Nevertheless he was able, by his own power and the support of the government, to maintain his eminent position.

By the terms of the treaty of 1832 the Sacs and Foxes surrendered the Black Hawk Purchase but

retained a tract of four hundred square miles on the Iowa River which included Keokuk's village. Four years later Keokuk's Reserve was ceded to the United States, and the Indians moved to a new location on the Des Moines River where Keokuk built his lodge near the old trading post at Iowa-ville. In later years he had his principal village near the mouth of Sugar Creek, not far from the present city of Ottumwa.

Meanwhile all was not well among the Sacs. The old embers of bitterness that had existed within the tribe burst into flame. Led by Hard Fish, the adherents of Black Hawk's old British band openly attacked Keokuk's administration of affairs. He was charged with entering into a conspiracy with the traders to defraud the Indians and particularly the followers of Hard Fish. Moreover, the disbursement of the annuities by Keokuk was alleged to be partial, if not corrupt, but he always managed to suppress the opposition.

Many times his life was threatened because of his dishonesty, and on one occasion it was more than threatened. While some of the Indians were returning from a visit to the half-breeds near the mouth of the Des Moines River the ill-feeling between the Keokuk faction and the Hard Fish faction, which always manifested itself when whisky was flowing, turned into action with the result that Nahseuskuk, one of Black Hawk's sons, wounded Keokuk in the chest. The injury was so

severe that the chief had to be taken home in a canoe and it was some time before he recovered.

In 1845 Keokuk led his people out of their old Iowa haunts and into the State of Kansas. By that time profligacy and dissipation had laid strong hands upon the old chief. His declining years were filled with disgrace. Found to be untrustworthy, he was no longer in good repute with anyone. His inordinate love of money necessary to satisfy his thirst for vainglorious display had found him out. In everything he went to excess — in ostentation, in the exercise of authority, in revelry. He became a confirmed inebriate. His dominant will and insatiable ambition, being turned to the gratification of selfish desires, invoked his ruin no less than the same qualities directed toward proper ends had made him a great leader.

Within three years after leaving Iowa, early in 1848, Keokuk was dead. Some said that he died from a severe attack of delirium tremens, but others reported that he had been poisoned by a member of his tribe whom he had defrauded. Whichever version was correct, the passing of Keokuk was sordid. As the warp and woof of his life was of many hues, the tapestry of his career contained brilliant achievements in which the nobler strands of his nature were uppermost, but in the end the whole fabric was one drab expanse, unrelieved by any vestige of former grandeur.

F. R. AUMANN

The Council on the Iowa

Saukenuk was the principal village of the Sac Indians. Strategically situated at the mouth of the Rock River in the Illinois country, this large Indian community remained for many years the seat of one of the most powerful tribes in the Upper Mississippi Valley. There the squaws cultivated extensive cornfields on the fertile river bottoms, while the braves found game abundant along the streams and particularly upon Rock Island. Moreover, a cave at the lower end of Rock Island was supposed to be inhabited by a good spirit that watched over the welfare of the Indians.

But an evil day came in 1804 when the good spirit was impotent against the white man's whisky. Some of the tribal chiefs surrendered all of their lands east of the Mississippi and promised to move west whenever the country was surveyed and sold to settlers. By 1827 settlers began to arrive in the vicinity of Rock Island, and in the spring of 1829 a few white men actually took possession of part of the cultivated fields at Saukenuk. This was contrary to the terms of the treaty, for the land had not yet been surveyed, and George Davenport, the Rock Island trader, successfully interceded for the Indians, though he advised them to

move across the river. Keokuk, the man of peace, established a new village for his band on the south bank of the Iowa River a few miles above its mouth, but Black Hawk, the leader of the hostile band, insisted upon remaining at Saukenuk in defiance of orders from the military authorities at Fort Armstrong. In June, 1831, however, he learned that a large force of undisciplined militia was advancing upon his village and, realizing the fatal consequences of a conflict with them, he hastily decamped and sought refuge in the Iowa country.

It was a severe blow to the old chief. Expelled from his lifelong home, his tribe divided, Black Hawk brooded over the decline of his power and the waning fortunes of his people. But his young warriors still had faith in their bold leader. They counselled war, and the squaws clamored for their cornfields in Illinois. Nahpope and Winneshiek also gave him bad advice, promising aid from the Winnebago and ultimate support by the British in Canada. In the spring of 1832 Black Hawk decided to go on the warpath.

Having laid a plot to capture Fort Armstrong at one bold stroke, he planned to invade Illinois and drive out the settlers. To succeed he would need many warriors, so in April he went with his whole band — braves, women, and children — to Keokuk's village where he hoped to rouse the ancient fighting spirit of his tribesmen and gain

many recruits. Well he realized that it was a final contest for tribal leadership. If he could win the support of Keokuk's band he would be the acknowledged leader of the Sacs, but if he should fail Keokuk's supremacy would be all the more secure and his own cause would be only a forlorn hope. The wily Keokuk was no less aware of the decisive consequences of the occasion.

Into the village of his rival rode the proud old warrior Black Hawk at the head of his band. They came armed and painted for war, singing their most stirring war songs and beating their drums. A British flag was borne aloft. Black Hawk was clad in the uniform of a British soldier and carried a heavy cavalry sword. When the whole band had assembled, some braves proceeded to erect a war post in a level space not far from a lodge where a white spy lay concealed among some hides and other camp equipage. From his vantage point Josiah Smart, the spy, an Indian interpreter and friend of Keokuk, saw and heard all that happened.

According to his account as related by Perry A. Armstrong in *The Sauks and the Black Hawk War*, Black Hawk withdrew a few paces, uttered a terrific war-whoop, and hurled his tomahawk into the soft bass-wood war post, thus figuratively cleaving the skull of an enemy. In that manner he declared his enlistment for battle. Nahpope, the second in command, cast his tomahawk close be-

side that of his chief, and the other braves followed in quick succession. When the war post was filled with tomahawks, the braves joined hands in a large circle and began their war dance, moving from left to right and keeping time with the drums. Faster and faster sounded the drums, faster and faster danced the Indians until the line was broken. Then each warrior, uttering a wild yell, rushed to the post and struck it with the poll of his tomahawk, thereby pledging himself to go on the warpath with his chief. After thus enlisting, the braves continued the war dance, leaping into the air, bending low, or skulking behind imaginary trees, each exhibiting some intended feat of war according to his own impulse.

At last, when the warriors were beginning to show signs of exhaustion, the venerable Black Hawk stepped into the circle and approached the war post with majestic stride. Sixty-five winters had frosted his hair, but his carriage was erect and his eyes still blazed. Proudly he faced his tribesmen. A mighty cheer burst from the lips of the savage throng. Even Keokuk's braves joined in the shout. Never had Black Hawk received a lustier ovation, never was popular acclaim more welcome. Already the spirit of war was rampant. A sign from the old chief and the howling mob became silent, eager to hear every word. Then Black Hawk spoke.

Headmen, Chiefs, Braves, and Warriors of the Sacs:

For more than a hundred winters our nation was a powerful, happy, and united people. The Great Spirit gave to us a territory, seven hundred miles in length, along the Mississippi, reaching from Prairie du Chien to the mouth of the Illinois River. This vast territory was composed of the finest and best land for the home and use of the Indian ever found in this country. The woods and prairies teemed with buffalo, moose, elk, bear and deer, with other game suitable to our enjoyment, while its lakes, rivers, creeks, and ponds were alive with the very best kinds of fish for our food. The islands in the Mississippi were our gardens, where the Great Spirit caused berries, plums and other fruits to grow in great abundance, while the soil, when cultivated, produced corn, beans, pumpkins and squash of the finest quality and largest quantities. Our children were never known to cry of hunger, and no stranger, red or white, was permitted to enter our lodges without finding food and rest. Our nation was respected by all who came in contact with it, for we had the ability as well as the courage to defend and maintain our rights of territory, person and property against the world. Then, indeed, was it an honor to be called a Sac, for that name was a passport to our people travelling in other territories and among other nations. But an evil day befell us when we became a divided nation, and with that division our glory deserted us, leaving us with the hearts and heels of the rabbit in place of the courage and strength of the bear. All this was brought about by the Long Guns, who now claim all our territory east of the Mississippi, including Saukenuk, our ancient village, where all of us were born, raised, lived, hunted, fished and loved, and near which are our corn lands, which have yielded abundant harvest for a hundred winters, and where sleep the bones of our sacred dead, and around which cluster our fondest recollections of heroism and noble deeds of charity done by

our fathers, who were Sacs, not only in name, but in courage and action. I thank the Great Spirit for making me a Sac, and the son of a great Sac chief, and a lineal descendant of Nanamakee, the founder of our nation.

The Great Spirit is the friend and protector of the Sacs, and has accompanied me as your war chief upon the warpath against our enemies, and has given me skill to direct and you the courage to achieve a hundred victories over our enemies upon the warpath. All this occurred before we became a divided nation. We then had the courage and strength of the bear, but since the division our hearts and heels are like those of the rabbit and the fawn. We have neither courage nor confidence in our leaders or ourselves, and have fallen a prey to internal jealousies and petty strifes until we are no longer worthy of the illustrious name we bear. In a word, we have become subjects of ridicule and badinage, — "There goes a cowardly Sauk."

All this has resulted from the white man's accursed fire-water united with our own tribal quarrels and personal jealousies. The Great Spirit created this country for the use and benefit of his red children, and placed them in full possession of it, and we were happy and contented. Why did he send the palefaces across the great ocean to take it from us? When they landed on our territory they were received as long-absent brothers whom the Great Spirit had returned to us. Food and rest were freely given them by our fathers, who treated them all the more kindly on account of their weak and helpless condition. Had our fathers the desire, they could have crushed the intruders out of existence with the same ease we kill the blood-sucking mosquitoes. Little did our fathers then think they were taking to their bosoms, and warming them into life and vigor, a lot of torpid, half-frozen and starving vipers, which in a few winters would fix their deadly fangs upon the very bosoms that had nursed and cared for them when

they needed help. From the day when the palefaces landed upon our shores, they have been robbing us of our inheritance, and slowly, but surely, driving us back, back, back towards the setting sun, burning our villages, destroying our growing crops, ravishing our wives and daughters, beating our papposes with sticks, and brutally murdering our people upon the most flimsy pretenses and trivial causes.

Upon our return to Saukenuk from our winter hunting grounds last spring, we found the pale faces in our lodges, and they had torn down our fences and were plowing our corn lands and getting ready to plant their corn upon the lands which the Sacs have owned and cultivated for so many winters that our memory can not go back to them. Nor is this all. They claim to own our lands and lodges by right of purchase from the cowardly and treacherous Quashquamme, nearly thirty winters ago, and drive us away from our lodges and fields with kicks of their cruel boots, accompanied with vile cursing and beating with sticks. When returning from an ill-fated day's hunt, wearied and hungry, with my feet stumbling with the weight of sixty-four winters, I was basely charged by two palefaces of killing their hogs, which I indignantly denied, because the charge was false, but they told me I lied, and then they took my gun, powder-horn and bullet-pouch from me by violence, and beat me with a hickory stick until the blood ran down my back like drops of falling rain, and my body was so lame and sore for a moon that I could not hunt or fish. They brought their accursed fire-water to our village, making wolves of our braves and warriors, and then when we protested against the sale and destroyed their bad spirits, they came with a multitude on horseback, compelling us to flee across the Mississippi for our lives, and then they burned down our ancient village and turned their horses into our growing corn.

They are now running their plows through our graveyards, turning up the bones and ashes of our sacred dead, whose spirits are calling to us from the land of dreams for vengeance on the despoilers. Will the descendants of Nana-makee and our other illustrious dead stand idly by and suffer this sacrilege to be continued? Have they lost their strength and courage, and become squaws and papposes? The Great Spirit whispers in my ear, no! Then let us be again united as a nation and at once cross the Mississippi, rekindle our watch-fires upon our ancient watch-tower, and send forth the war whoop of the united Sacs, and our cousins, the Meskwakies, Pottawattamies, Ottawas, Chippeways, Winnebagoes and Kickapoos, will unite with us in avenging our wrongs upon the white pioneers of Illinois. When we recross the Mississippi with a strong army, the British Father will send us not only guns, tomahawks, spears, knives and ammunition in abundance, but he will also send us British soldiers to fight our battles for us. Then will the deadly arrow and fatal tomahawk hurtle through the air at the hearts and heads of the pale-faced invaders, sending their guilty spirits to the white man's place of endless punishment, and should we, while on the warpath, meet the Pauguk, our departing spirits will be led along that path which is strewn with beautiful flowers, laden with the fragrance of patriotism and heroism, which leads to the land of dreams, whence the spirits of our fathers are beckoning us on, to avenge their wrongs.

What a stirring appeal to the patriotism of the tribe! Playing upon the dominant emotions of the Indians, Black Hawk wrought them into a state of savage frenzy. Already under the influence of the war dance and too much whisky, men and women alike gave free expression to their enthusiasm for

war. Even Keokuk joined in the applause. Nahpope made an impassioned speech in which he gave further assurance of military aid from neighboring tribes and predicted the formation of a great Indian confederation as numerous as the trees of the forest.

By this time the Indians were howling demons. There was no distinction between Black Hawk's band and their more peaceful hosts. Loudly Keokuk's headmen and warriors demanded that he lead them upon the warpath against the palefaces to avenge their wrongs. Nothing but a miracle could stem the tide of martial fervor.

It was a proud and happy moment for Black Hawk. The dreams of a lifetime were about to be realized. The success of his scheme to drive the white men out of the Great Valley seemed assured.

For Keokuk the occasion was fraught with equally potent consequences. Never had he been placed in such a critical and difficult position. Pledged to preserve peace with the settlers, he realized that his tribe was rushing pell-mell into war — into a hopeless struggle against insuperable odds. Open opposition to the prevailing opinion would mean loss of leadership, if not personal injury during the mad excitement of the moment. To temporize would seem like treason. It was no occasion for expedients or compromise. Whatever he did must be decisive, and done at once.

But Keokuk was not called the Watchful Fox

for nothing. He was intelligent, cunning, and masterful, with the courage of his convictions. When called upon to lead his braves to battle, Keokuk had decided upon his course of action. Without the slightest hesitation, he strode through the crowd of war-crazed savages and, walking directly to the war post, he placed his hand upon it. This was construed to mean that he was enlisting for the war and a great shout went up. The powerful Keokuk would have need of all his diplomacy and all his eloquence if he were to quell the lust for white men's blood. Perhaps only he and Black Hawk realized fully what was at stake. Calmly he waited for the tumult to subside. That was one of the most fateful and dramatic moments in the history of the tribe. Slowly Keokuk began:

Headmen, Chiefs, Braves, and Warriors of the Sacs, I have heard and considered your demand to be led forth upon the warpath against the palefaces to avenge the many wrongs, persecutions, outrages and murders committed by them upon our people. I deeply sympathise with you in your sense and construction of these terrible wrongs. Few, indeed, are our people who do not mourn the death of some near and loved one at the hands of the Long Guns, who are becoming very numerous. Their cabins are as plenty as the trees in the forest, and their soldiers are springing up like grass on the prairies. They have the talking thunder, which carries death a long way off, with long guns and short ones, long knives and short ones, ammunition and provisions in abundance, with powerful war horses for their soldiers to ride. In a contest where our numbers are so unequal to theirs we must ultimately

fail. All we can reasonably expect or hope is to wreak the utmost of our vengeance upon their hated heads, and fall, when fall we must, with our faces to the enemy. Great is the undertaking, and desperate must be our exertions. Every brave and warrior able to throw a tomahawk or wield a war-club must go with us. Once across the Mississippi, let no one think of returning while there is a foe to strike or a scalp to take, and when we fall — if our strength permit — let us drag our feeble, bleeding bodies to the graves of our ancestors, and there die, that our ashes may commingle with theirs, while our departing spirits shall follow the long trail made by them in their passage to the land of spirits.

It is my duty as your chief to be your father while in the paths of peace, and your leader and champion while on the warpath. You have decided to follow the path of war, and I will lead you forth to victory if the Good Spirit prevails. If not, and the Bad Spirit rules, then will I perish at my post of duty. But what shall we do with our old and infirm, our women and children? We can not take them with us upon the warpath, for they would hamper us in our movements and defeat us of our vengeance. We dare not leave them behind us, doomed to perish of hunger or fall captive to the palefaces, who would murder the old and the young, but reserve our wives and daughters for a fate worse than death itself.

I will lead you forth upon the warpath, but upon this condition: That we first put our wives and children, our aged and infirm, gently to sleep in that slumber which knows no waking this side the spirit land, and then carefully and tenderly lay their bodies away by the side of our sacred dead, from whence their freed spirits shall depart on the long journey to the happy homes in the land of dreams beneath, beyond the Evening Star. For we go upon the long trail which has no turn — from which,

in a few short moons, we shall follow them, but they must not follow us. This sacrifice is demanded of us by the very love we bear those dear ones. Our every feeling of humanity tells us we can not take them with us, and dare not leave them behind us.

Thus adroitly, while promising to accept the decision of the tribe, Keokuk compelled his people to think of the consequences. The half-drunken, blood-thirsty savages stood cowed before the terrible sacrifice that their chief required of them. Keokuk noticed the effect of his words and was quick to press his advantage over Black Hawk.

To you, venerable Chief, do I appeal for an answer to what I have said. Your long experience upon the warpath tells you I have spoken the truth; yet, with all your wonderful eloquence, you have urged us to this terrible sacrifice. Brooding over the oft-repeated wrongs committed by the palefaces upon you and your people, your mind has grown weak, until you have lent a willing ear to the whisperings of evil counsellors, who can not speak the truth because their tongues are forked, like the viper's.

They came to you under the guise and pretense of friendship, and by the use of base flattery and hypocrisy gained your confidence, only to lead you into the crooked path of ruin and destruction. They are enemies of yours and your band, instead of friends. They first told you the British Father has promised you aid and assistance, in warriors as well as guns, tomahawks, spears, knives, ammunition and provisions, as soon as you should recross the Mississippi at the head of a hostile army. Why has he not furnished you these things, to enable you to raise, arm and equip your army, ready for war? This fact proves the whole story a lie, prepared no doubt by Nahpope or



From a daguerrotype taken in St. Louis in 1847

CHIEF KEOKUK—AS AN OLD MAN

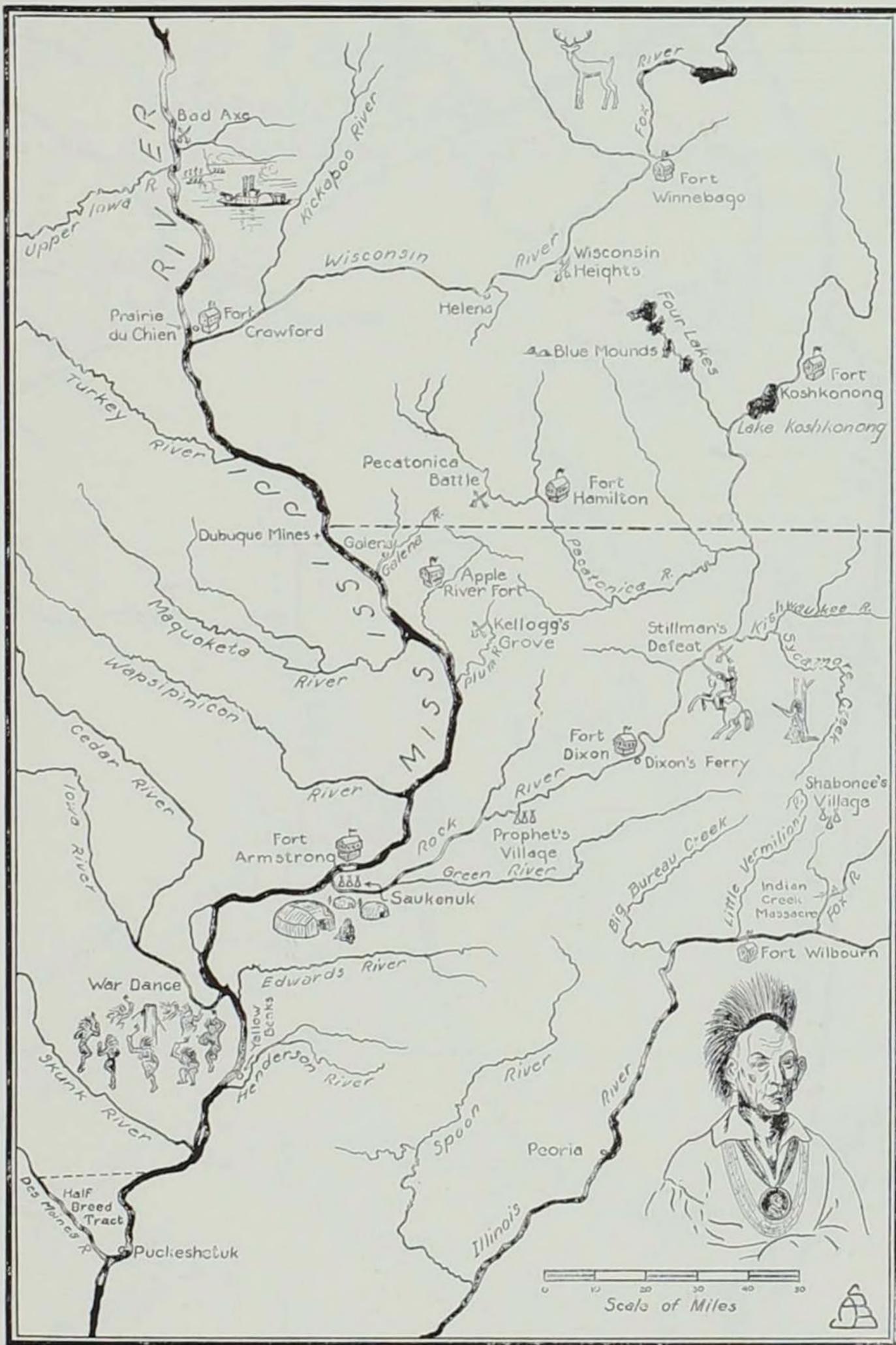
This likeness of Keokuk was taken one year before his death when the colorful chief was about sixty-seven years old. Keokuk had journeyed to St. Louis from the Sauk and Fox Reservation in Kansas, probably to pick up the annuities to be distributed to his followers. Age and a dissolute life had left their mark on the once proud warrior who died in Kansas in the spring of 1848.



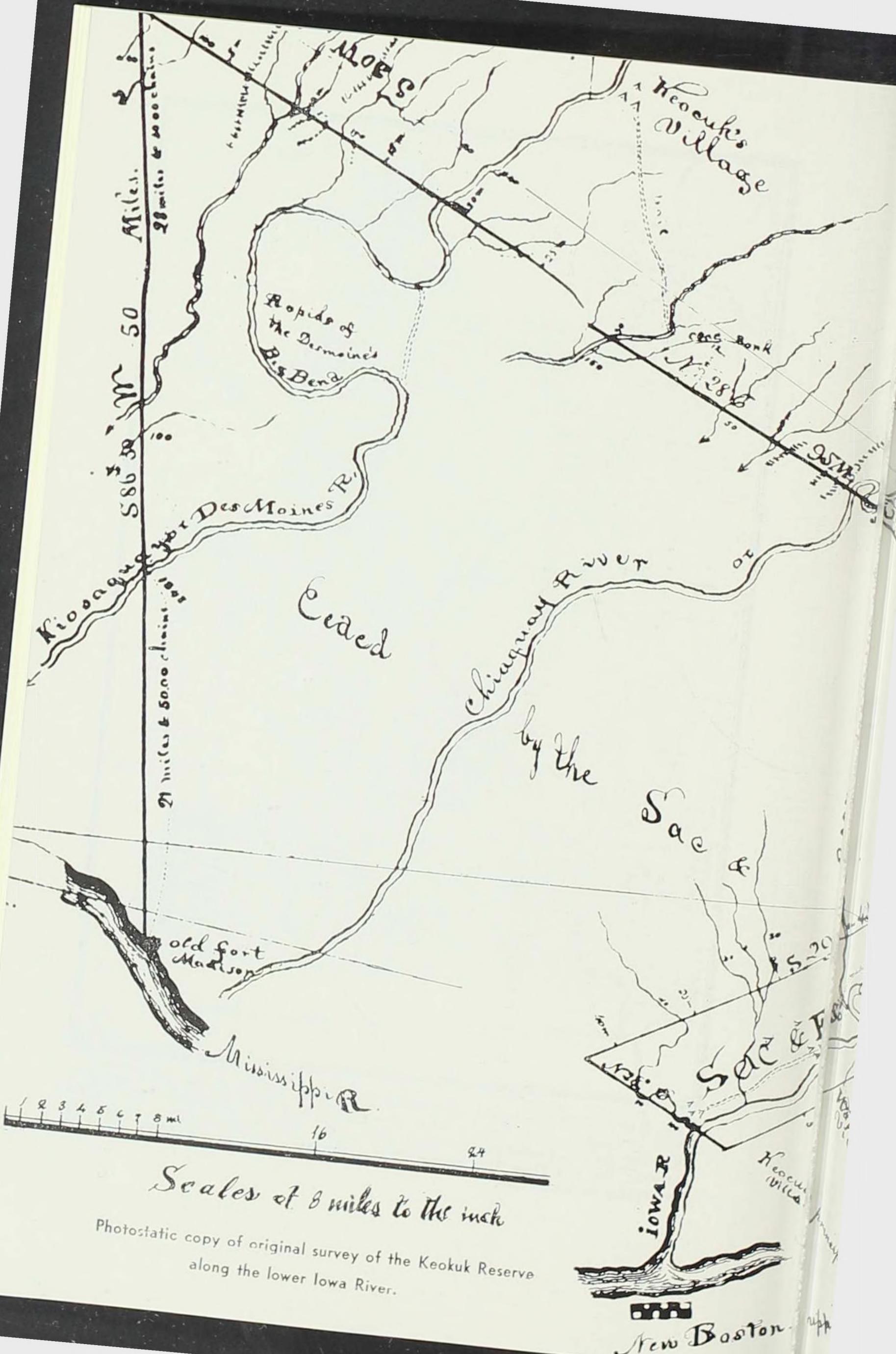
From a painting by George Catlin

CHIEF KEOKUK—IN HIS VILLAGE ON THE
DES MOINES RIVER

"I found Ke-o-Kuck to be a chief of fine and portly figure, with a good countenance, and great dignity and grace in his manners . . . he brought in all his costly wardrobe, that I might select for his portrait such as suited me best; but at once named (of his own accord) the one that was purely Indian. In that he paraded for several days, and in it I painted him at full length."



The above map illustrates pictorially the main events of the Black Hawk War beginning with the Council on the Iowa (War Dance) and ending with the defeat of Black Hawk at Bad Axe. The focal point of ill-feeling between the red man and the white can be seen in the proximity of Fort Armstrong to Saukenuk.

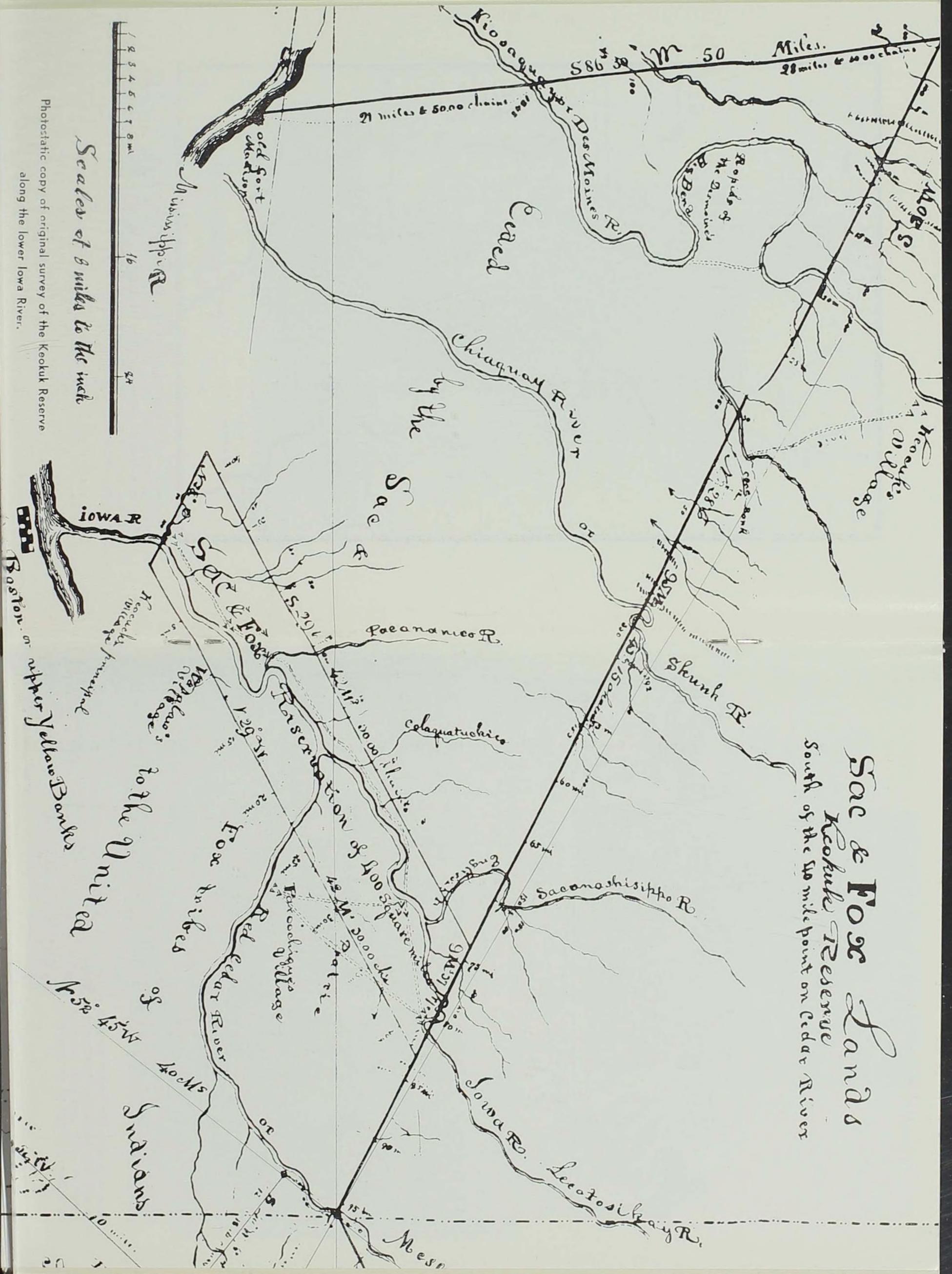


Scale of 8 miles to the inch

Photostatic copy of original survey of the Keokuk Reserve along the lower Iowa River.

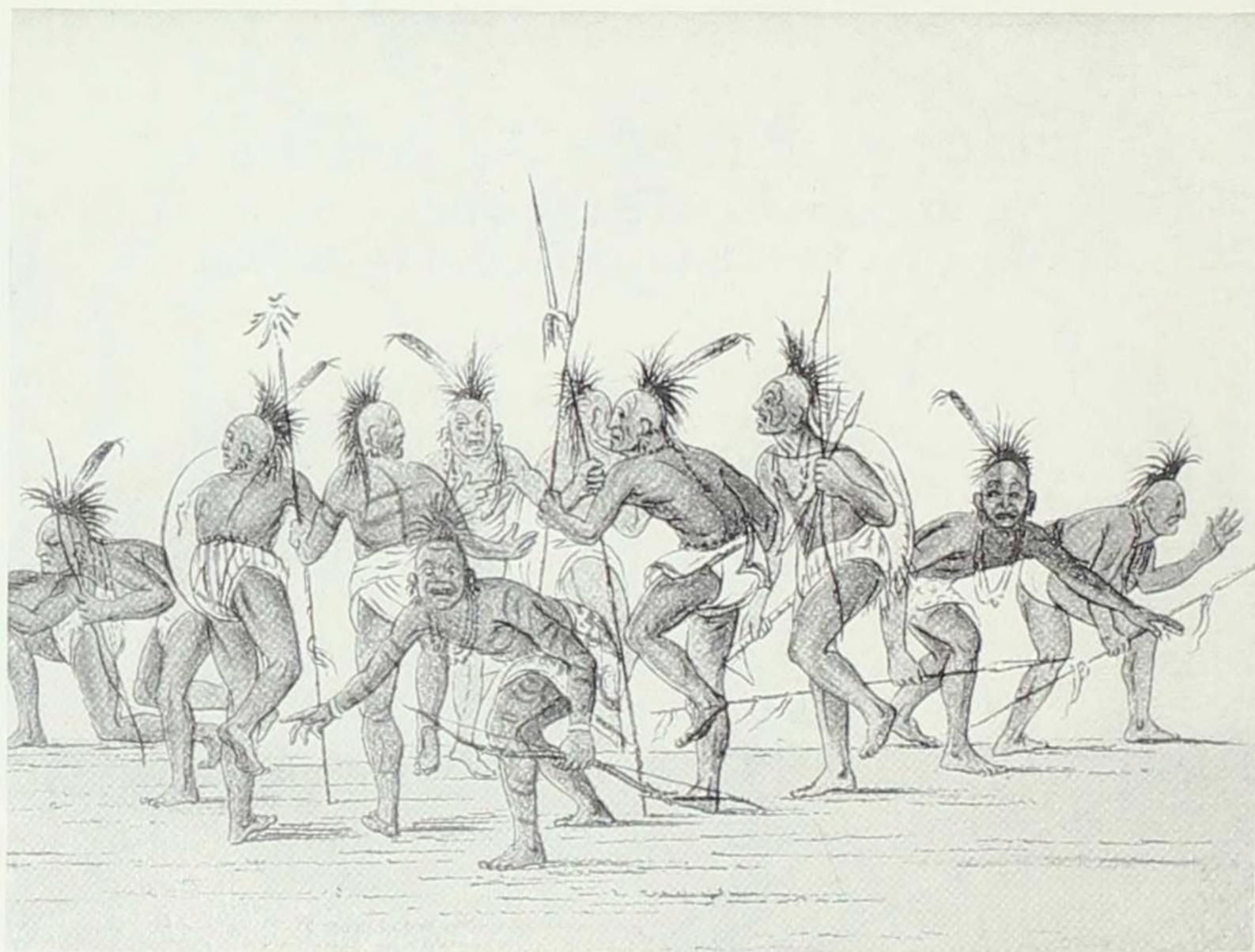
New Boston

Sac & Fox Lands
Keokuk Reserve
 South of the 50 mile point on Cedar River



Photostatic copy of original survey of the Keokuk Reserve along the lower Iowa River.

Scales of 8 miles to the inch



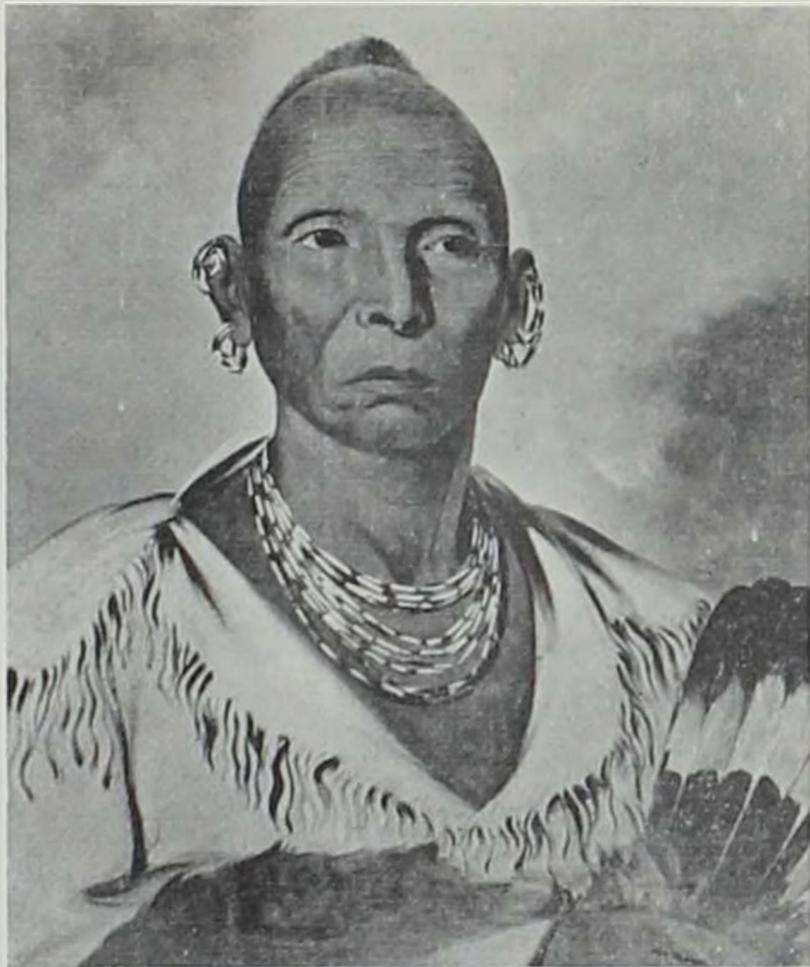
From Catlin's North American Indians

The Discovery Dance



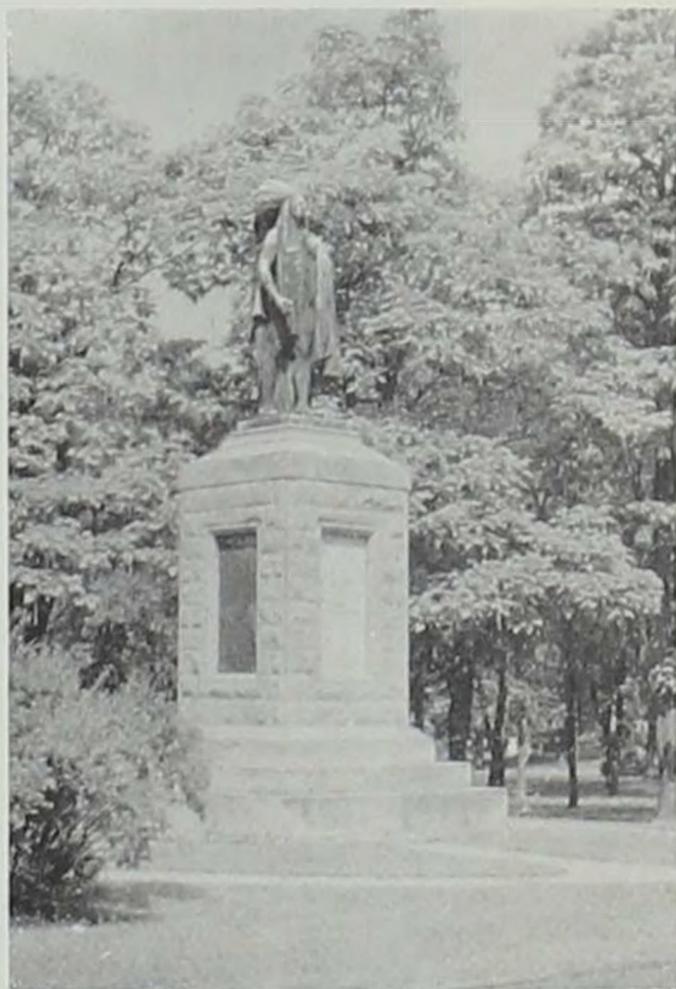
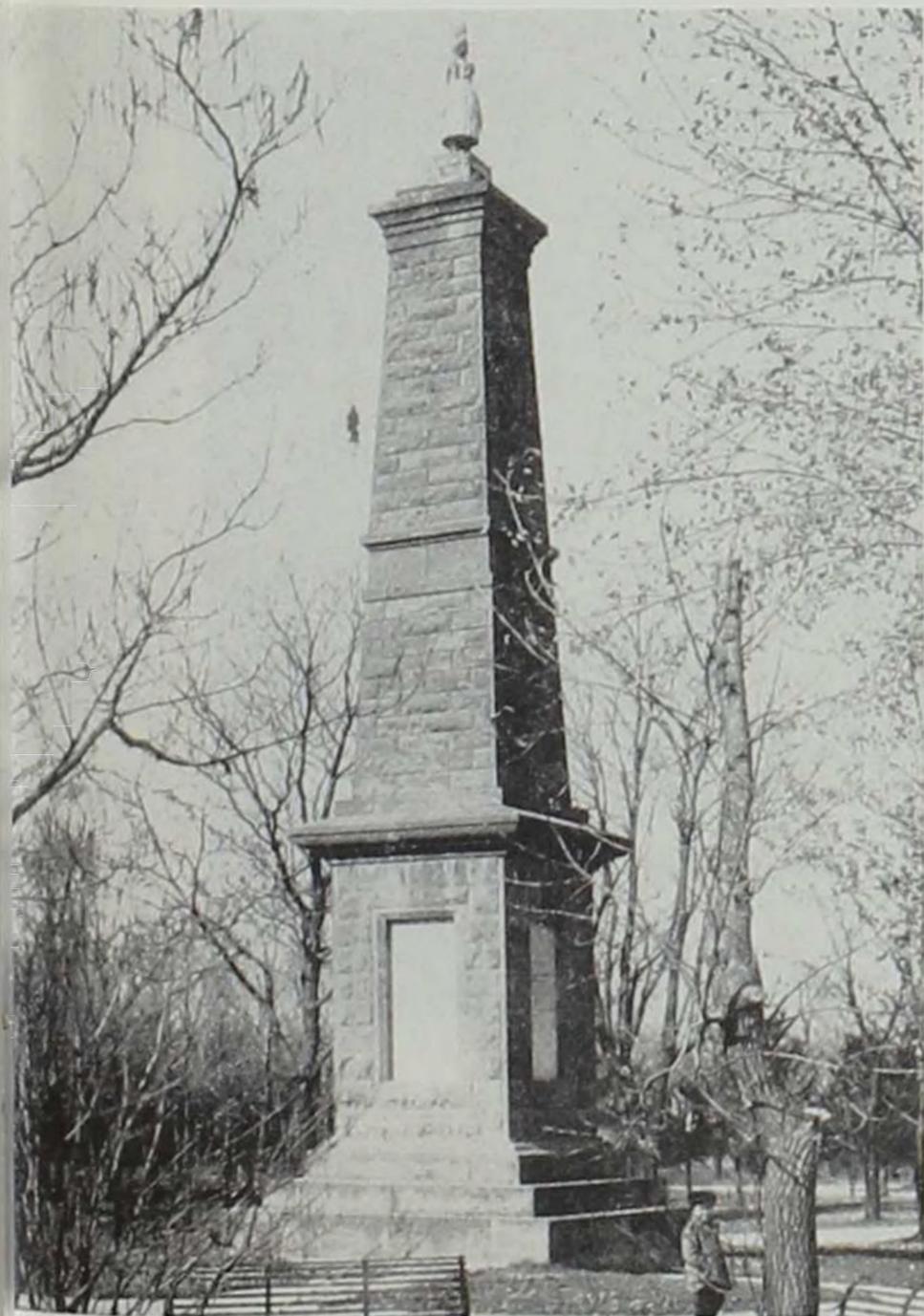
From E. D. Mansfield, Life and Services of General Winfield Scott

Scott describes the Indian conduct at the treaty ending the Black Hawk War. "When a council was to meet, they came at a furious charge; suddenly dismounted, arranged themselves in order, and then, between lines of soldiers, entered the pavilion with the firmness of victors, but with all the deep solemnity of a funeral."



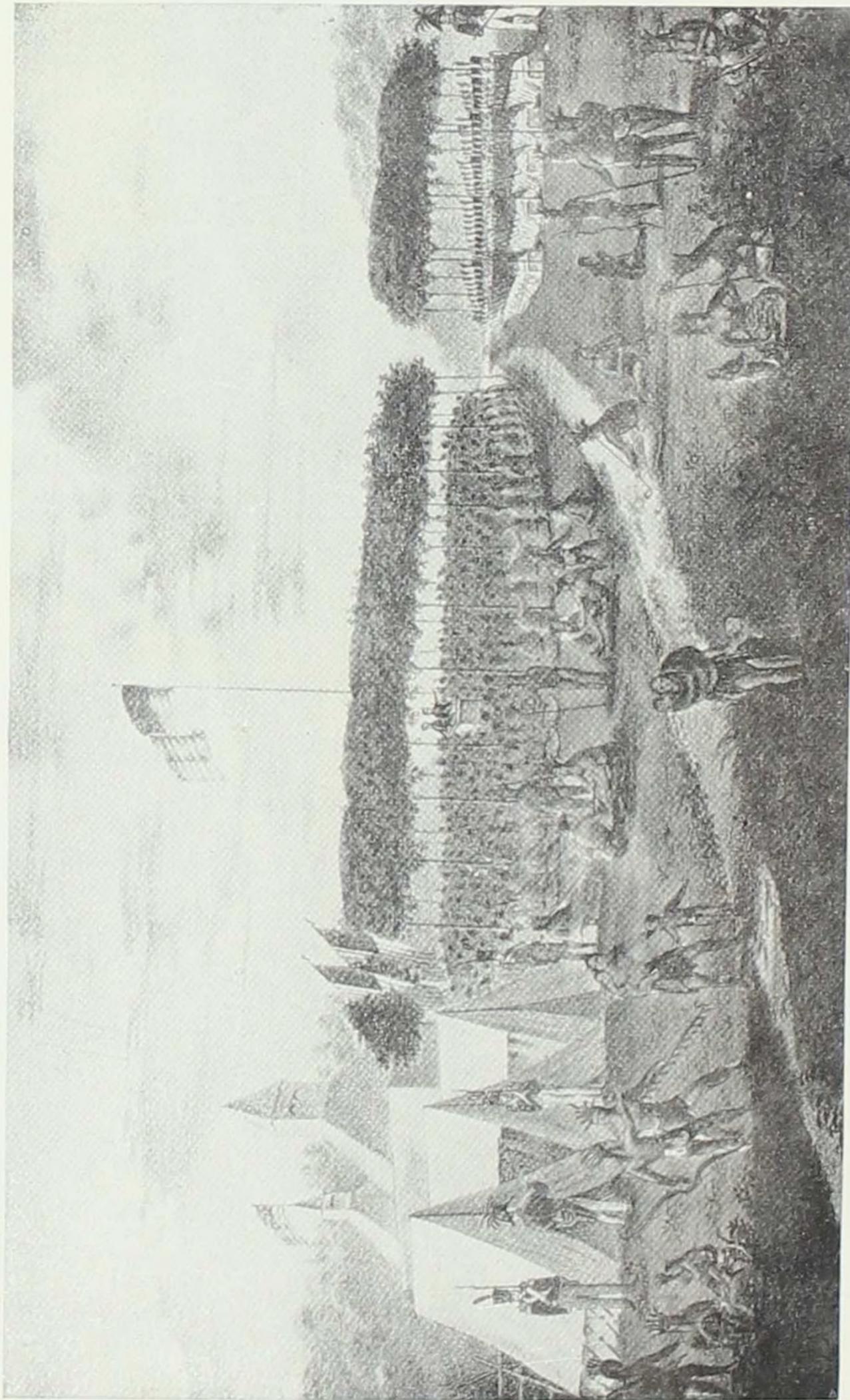
BLACK HAWK

Painting by the famous American Indian artist . . . George Catlin.



CHIEF KEOKUK
Keokuk

Monuments to Keokuk in Keokuk,
Iowa



From a Painting by J. O. Lewis
The Great Council of 1825 at Prairie du Chien created the Neutral Line.

his cunning brother, Winneshiek, for the sole purpose of deceiving and misleading you and your band. The British Father is at peace with our Great Father at Washington, and neither knows of or cares for you or your grievances.

The same evil counsellors have told you that the moment you shall sound your war whoop east of the Mississippi all the Indian tribes between that and the Illinois River will rise up as a single warrior and unite with you under your banner to avenge their wrongs upon the white settlers. What wrongs have they to avenge? They are on terms of peace and good-will with these white settlers, and have no cause of complaint or grievance whatever. Yet they have told you that these Indians across the river were not only ready but eager to join you in a general massacre of the frontier inhabitants of northern Illinois, and are now only waiting your signal fires to be rekindled upon the watch-tower at Saukenuk to begin the slaughter. If this be true, why are not their war chiefs here tonight? Where are Waubonsie, Red Devil, Big Thunder Shaata, and Meachelle? Why are they not here in person, or by their representatives, if it be true they are anxious to go upon the warpath with you? Their absence is proof conclusive that they have no intention or desire to join you in this suicidal undertaking.

You have been deceived — aye, cruelly deceived — by these counsellors with a forked tongue, who are leading you into the crooked path of the Bad Spirit, and have no love for you or respect for your gray hairs or good name. I beseech you, by the noble character you have always borne, by the honors and trophies you have won upon the warpath, by the love you bear your gallant little band, by everything you hold sacred and dear, abandon this wild, visionary and desperate undertaking, and return to your village. Seed time is here, but your grounds have not been prepared for the planting. Go back and plant the sum-

mer's crop. Arise to the dignity and grandeur of your honored position as the father of your gallant little band; shake off the base fetters of the Bad Spirit which bind you hand and foot, and turn your feet from the crooked warpath into the path that leads to peace. In this way only can you save your true and trusty band from certain defeat, if not utter annihilation. If you still persist in going upon the warpath against the white people, then indeed may we bid farewell to Black Hawk, whose protecting spirit has forsaken him in his old age, and suffered his star of success — which has led him in triumph to a hundred victories on the warpath — to go down behind a cloud, never to rise again; and when the Pauguk comes, his lofty spirit will depart, groping its way doubtfully along the dark and crooked path to the land of dreams, unhonored, unlamented, and unwept.

A solemn stillness settled over the whole village. In contrast to the recent hubbub, the silence was foreboding, oppressive. The braves were sobered. Infuriated men were pacified. Indian mothers pressed their babes to their breasts and waited with throbbing hearts and fearful ears to hear their fate. But the ardor for war had suddenly cooled. Even Black Hawk was completely overwhelmed by the avalanche of eloquence which swept everything before it. His dream of vengeance was shattered; his vision of a great Indian confederacy appeared only as a preposterous nightmare. He was a vanquished leader on the eve of his greatest war.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

Indian Oratory

In the peaceful relations of the red men and the whites there was one faculty in which the Indian never failed to excite admiration. That was his manner of speech. Whether it be in the region of the Six Nations, in the land of the Seminoles, in the forests of Kentucky and Ohio, or on the prairies of Iowa, the richness of imaginative power, the simplicity of structure, and the nobility of content of Indian orations always left a lasting impression upon the white men who heard them. The names of Tecumseh, Cornstalk, and Logan attest to this fact in the Ohio country; while Keokuk, Poweshiek, and Black Hawk of Iowa are justly famous for their forensic ability. In other sections Osceola, Red Cloud, Chief Joseph, and Red Jacket have spoken words that have endured, a significant commentary on their power of expression.

On every frontier Indian oratory was dominated by one prevailing characteristic. In the speeches of Black Hawk and Poweshiek no less than in Logan's "Lament" there was the refrain of grievous wrongs long suffered and the pathos of a passing race. Here a word, there a gesture, all pointing to the realization of nothing left in life for the

individual or the group. The fire and audacity of bold words were always tempered by that melancholy tone of resignation to an unjust fate. In the famous speech of Logan there is a strain like something in the chorus of an old Greek tragedy.

I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed and said, "Logan is the friend of white men." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it: I have killed many: I have fully glutted my vengeance: for my country I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbor a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? — Not one.

So spoke Logan, the Mingo chief, back in the Ohio country in 1774. "I may challenge the whole orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, and of any other eminent orator, if Europe has furnished more eminent, to produce a single passage, superior to the speech of Logan," wrote Thomas Jefferson. Now listen to Black Hawk addressing his band of Sacs in 1831, when they were ordered to leave Saukenuk and move west of the Mississippi.

Warriors, sixty summers or more have gone since our fathers sat down here and our mothers erected their lodges on this spot. On these pastures our horses have fattened; our wives and daughters have cultivated the cornfields and planted beans and melons and squashes; from these rivers our young men have obtained an abundance of fish. Here, too, you have been protected from your old enemy, the Sioux, by the mighty Mississippi. And here are the bones of our warriors and chiefs and orators.

But alas! what do I hear? The birds that have long gladdened these groves with their melody now sing a melancholy song! They say, "The red man must leave his home to make room for the white man."

I will not believe that the Great Chief, who is pleased to call himself our Father, will send his warriors against his children for no other cause than contending to cultivate their own fields and occupy their own houses. No! I will not believe it until I see his army. Not until then will I forsake the graves of my ancestors and the home of my youth.

Scarcely a year later, after his defeat at Bad Axe, Black Hawk, a prisoner of war, told of his motives in going on the warpath, of his hopes and disappointments, and of his final defeat. For simple, tragic beauty this speech is unexcelled.

My warriors fell around me. It began to look dismal. I saw my evil day at hand. The sun rose clear on us in the morning; at night it sank in a dark cloud and looked like a ball of fire. This was the last sun that shone on Black Hawk. He is now a prisoner of the white man, but he can stand the torture. He is not afraid of death. He is no coward — Black Hawk is an Indian.

The same plaintive, melancholy note pervades the brief speech of Poweshiek to the settlers of Johnson County on the Fourth of July, 1838. "Soon," he said, "I shall go to a new home and you will plant corn where my dead sleep. Our towns, the paths we have made, the flowers we love, will soon be yours. I have moved many times and have seen the white man put his feet in the tracks of the Indian and make the earth into fields and gardens."

Other Indian orators have been given high sanction by competent observers. Whatever their relative merit may be, the reported speeches of Black Hawk and Keokuk at the war council on the Iowa River when they were contesting for leadership of the tribe deserve a high place in Indian oratory. Black Hawk urging war; Keokuk urging peace. Keokuk came to be acknowledged as one of the greatest orators of his day, comparing favorably with John C. Calhoun and other prominent speakers in Congress and out. Certainly the orations of the modern and ancient world would need to be diligently thumbed to find a more powerful appeal or technique more adroit. That it effected its purpose is evident. Black Hawk's dreams were shattered. If the supreme test of oratory is the achievement of a purpose, then Keokuk's speech to the Sac warriors on the eve of the Black Hawk War may be classed as a masterpiece.

Besides this quality of sadness for the loss of

the homes of their fathers, there runs through Indian oratory a universal trait of drawing upon the physical world around them for figures of speech. "A language," says Francis Parkman, "extremely deficient in words of general and abstract signification renders the use of figures indispensable, and it is from this cause above all others that the flowers of Indian rhetoric derive their origin."

Nature was close to the red man. His whole experience was intimately associated with the prairies and forests, the changing seasons, storm and sunshine. It is not strange, therefore, that he should speak in terms of the natural phenomena about him. Almost every speech is replete with metaphorical allusion. "Their cabins are as plenty as the trees in the forest, and their soldiers are springing up like grass on the prairies," said Keokuk at the war council on the Iowa in 1832, speaking of the strength of the white men. "They have the talking thunder, which carries death a long way off, with long guns and short ones, long knives and short ones, ammunition and provisions in abundance, with powerful war horses for their soldiers to ride."

In all the transcripts of Indian speeches, suffering undoubtedly from misinterpretation and misunderstanding, this custom of depending upon the rich storehouse of nature for figures of speech is prevalent. The meaning is never ambiguous, yet every idea is richly adorned with simile and meta-

phor, imparting a beauty to Indian eloquence that is singularly appropriate.

Lew Sarett, who has associated intimately with the modern, semi-civilized Indian, remarks this tendency even to-day. "His pantheistic conception of nature," he says, "is sublime in its personification of the wilderness, in its humanization of earth and sky and water, of beast and bird and reptile, of the flash of the lightning, the rumble of thunder, and the roar of the big winds. In the supernatural world created by his imagination there is a weird mysticism; for the Indian walks through life ever beckoned by unseen hands, ever communing with the ghosts of the unseen spirit of beast and devil and god." What wonder that some of their mystic love of nature is reflected in their speech.

F. R. AUMANN

Buffalo Hunting with Keokuk

A gloomy spirit pervaded the Sauk and Fox villages. It was early spring of 1833 and the confederated tribes were on the verge of starvation. Crushed and humiliated in the Black Hawk War, their fields untilled, the remnant of Black Hawk's band had flung themselves on Keokuk for protection. The task of feeding so many hungry mouths throughout a long winter had taxed the resources of Keokuk and his followers.

While the white squatters were preparing to enter the Black Hawk Purchase, the Sauk and Fox Indians were planting their crops in the Keokuk Reserve. This reservation, on both sides of the Iowa River, included portions of Johnson, Muscatine, Louisa, Washington, and Des Moines counties. It would require more than a bountiful harvest to sustain the confederated tribes during the following winter. Since it had been customary for the Sauks and Foxes to supplement their crops with a buffalo hunt, Keokuk issued a call for the chiefs and headmen of both tribes to convene at his village.

Keokuk's principal village was located on the right bank of the Iowa River "about twelve miles" from its confluence with the Mississippi. It was

there that preparations for the expedition were made. Solemn religious rites were observed, for the Indians obtained a large supply of their meats and pelts from these annual summer forays. The hunt usually took place during the months of June, July, and August, when the buffalo were fat and their hair thin. At this time the flesh was in the best condition for food and the pelts easiest to dress on both sides for the making of clothing, shields, bags, ropes, snowshoes, tents, and boat covers.

A hunting party, like a war party, was well organized. Sometimes the leader was the head of a family or kindred group; again he might be appointed to his office with certain ceremonies. In as much as Keokuk had just been recognized by the United States as the head of the confederated tribes, it was natural that he should head the hunting party.

The duties of a leader were numerous but well-defined. He decided the length of the day's journey and the night encampment. Moreover, since the main body on a tribal hunt was composed of old men and children, squaws and papooses, the leader had to throw a cordon of brave and trustworthy men around them. Although the Sauks and Foxes were originally a canoe people, a transition to horses was noted after the Black Hawk War. Hence a goodly number of the buffalo hunters in 1833 were prob-

ably mounted.

Whether on the trail or in camp, the Indians always kept close together. Stalking the buffalo alone was prohibited under penalty of flogging. If a man slipped away to hunt by himself, thereby scattering a herd and causing serious loss to the entire tribe, punishment as severe as death might be incurred. The destitute condition of the confederated tribes would have forced Keokuk and his chiefs to invoke drastic measures for the slightest infraction of the rules of the hunt. Apparently the Sauk and Fox hunters were well disciplined, for no such crimes were mentioned.

Early in the summer of 1833 Keokuk set out for the headwaters of the Iowa River. An Indian trail followed the west bank of the Iowa River to Wapello's village which was located five miles upstream near the present site of Wapello, Iowa. Wapello was first among the Foxes, and second only to the wily Keokuk in the councils of the Sauks and Foxes. A large party of Foxes, including Wapello himself, joined Keokuk. Although Wapello preferred to hunt on the headwaters of the Skunk, he realized the Sauk hunters must have strong support because of the implacable hostility between the Sioux and the confederated tribes. Thus, the Sioux had paid scant attention to the Neutral Line agreed upon by their chiefs and the Sauks and Foxes at Prairie du Chien in 1825. The creation of the Neutral

Ground in 1830, although it formed a forty-mile barrier between them, could scarcely be expected to ward off Sioux depredations, particularly when the buffalo themselves showed a preference for grazing in this area.

Leaving Wapello's village the combined body continued up the right bank of the Iowa River to present-day Columbus Junction, following the general route afterward selected for the Rock Island railroad. They crossed to the left bank a few miles below the English River. At this point was another Indian village. In as much as the buffalo hunters were headed for the prairies near the sources of the Iowa River, their trail followed the Iowa onward past the present site of Iowa City.

The popularity of the headwaters of the Iowa as a grazing place for the buffalo is attested by a map of 1835 on which Lieutenant Albert Miller Lea referred to this beautiful stream as the "Bison" River. Lea and his dragoon companions encountered small herds of buffalo along the upper reaches of the Skunk, the Iowa, and the Cedar rivers in 1835, and succeeded in killing a number of them. It was the first time Lea had seen the "lordly beast in his home", a clear indication that the buffalo was more common at that time in the northern part of Iowa than in the southern district.

Keokuk led his fellow tribesmen past what is

now the Amana colonies, the Tama Indian reservation, Marshalltown, Eldora, and Iowa Falls. Ten days after leaving their village near the mouth of the Iowa, the hunters discovered signs of buffalo. Although the exact region is not known, if the Indians traveled twenty miles a day they must have arrived in the Neutral Ground somewhere in present-day Wright or Franklin counties. Keokuk promptly ordered his men to encamp and the squaws were soon busy setting up shelters and preparing the evening meal. The next day Keokuk sent out small parties to make observations. That evening the hunters returned and reported a small herd of not over 300 buffalo. The satisfaction with which this news was received was dispelled when scouts declared they had "discovered signs of the Sioux; saw large smokes, and had no doubt they proceeded from their encampment." A council of war was immediately called.

Some of the more fiery warriors were in favor of advancing that very night and attacking the Sioux at dawn. Others, more conservative, favored removing the women and children to safety before making an attack. After listening gravely to the speeches of his headmen, Keokuk rose to lend his counsel to the assembled tribesmen. Eloquenty he related the many depredations that the Sioux had committed against the Sauks and Foxes, denouncing vehemently the brutal manner

in which the Sioux had butchered many of the women and children who had crossed the Mississippi River above Prairie du Chien following the defeat of Black Hawk at Bad Axe. "Scarcely a warrior in my presence but what has lost some friend or relation by the Sioux", he thundered. "Now is the time to chastise our enemies. Let us surround their camp this night, and, by the rising of tomorrow's sun, we will not leave a Sioux to relate the fall of his comrade!"

The assembled warriors greeted this plan with applause. An eye-witness declared: "Fire glistened in their eyes, they brandished their spears — drew their knives, and returned them to their scabbard — eager for the fight they had in view." After a short pause, Keokuk commenced pacing back and forth across the council lodge. Suddenly he stopped, remembering his promise to Major General Winfield Scott at Fort Armstrong the previous fall. Throwing down his spear he cried: "Warriors, I have been commanded by my Great Father not to go to war with the Sioux. I have promised, and will *keep my word*." A murmur of dissent ran through the lodge. Sensing the opposition of his men to such a conciliatory plan, Keokuk cried out in a stern voice: "I will go to the Sioux camp tomorrow — *I will make peace! OR FALL IN THE ATTEMPT!*"

The determined manner in which their chief spoke swept away all objections to the course he

proposed to follow. The council accordingly broke up and Keokuk immediately repaired to his lodge and was seen no more that evening. A party of braves visited Wapello to discuss the situation. A man of few words, Wapello was firm in his opinion that Keokuk would never return, and that the Sioux, if they once got a peace party in their power, would certainly kill them. "But", he concluded, "if Keokuk falls, we will avenge his death."

The next morning at dawn the sleeping camp was aroused by the trample of horses' hoofs. It was Keokuk leaving camp with three young braves who had volunteered to accompany him. Mounted and armed, the four emissaries of peace slipped quietly out of the still drowsy encampment without speaking a word. As soon as they were out of view the whole camp became a scene of confusion. Hastily each warrior prepared to follow his chief. Suddenly the "Village Crier" proclaimed in a loud voice that Keokuk had commanded that "no one must follow him — but remain in their camp, and be prepared for what might happen."

Meanwhile Keokuk and his three braves pushed their horses along at a brisk trot. As they neared the enemy the wily Sauk revealed his plans. Two of his men were to remain behind in such a way that they could watch the meeting between Keokuk and the Sioux but not be seen

themselves. Should their chieftain fall they were to hasten back with all speed to warn their fellow tribesmen.

After traveling about eighteen miles, the four ascended a slight elevation whence the Sioux camp suddenly burst into view. It was situated on a gentle rise immediately in front of them with a valley intervening. Keokuk concealed the two young men who were to remain behind on the top of the hill. He then advanced boldly across the intervening lowland with his companion toward the Sioux encampment which they discovered to be fortified. On his map of 1835 Lieutenant Lea notes a fort about sixteen miles south of Clear Lake in what is now northwestern Franklin County. Its position in the northern or Sioux cession of the Neutral Ground would correspond with the probable position of the Sioux encampment.

The moment the Sioux caught a glimpse of Keokuk the whole camp sprang into action. Meanwhile Keokuk had halted on the bank of a small creek a hundred yards away and made signs for the Sioux to come to him. Two flag bearers started immediately, followed by ten well-armed men. When they reached the creek, Keokuk motioned the flag bearers to cross but ordered the others to remain behind. To his astonishment, however, the whole force plunged into the creek and started across. The flag bearers reached the

other side first and advanced to shake hands. Keokuk instantly seized the insignia from the nearest flag bearer and placed a fur hat upon the emissary's head. His companion did the same. Then Keokuk, waving the flag, rode toward the armed Sioux who had just crossed the creek and were advancing to shake hands with him.

Suddenly one of the Sioux seized Keokuk's whip and attempted to drag him from his horse. Fortunately for Keokuk the whip was fastened to his wrist by a string which snapped and allowed the Sauk chieftain to regain his saddle. Meanwhile another Sioux had secured his horse by the bridle. Finding himself in this critical situation, Keokuk rose in his stirrups and, smiting his breast, told them his name was Keokuk. But the Sioux were apparently unmoved by this for his companion was also surrounded. Amazed at this gross violation of the rules of peace, Keokuk glanced hurriedly around to see if a way out could be found. Suddenly he discovered a gun presented at him! He exerted all his strength to break the Sioux's grip on his horse but all in vain. Reinforcements had joined the Sioux, and Keokuk perceived another gun raised at him in the rear. He now began to think that he would fall a sacrifice, since resistance seemed useless.

All at once the two Sauk braves who had been stationed on the hill, charged at full gallop upon the Sioux who gave way before them, retiring

backwards with their guns cocked. Keokuk and his companion wheeled off in the best manner possible, keeping their faces towards the enemy. The Watchful Fox then called to the Sioux: "We wish to make peace!"

"Meet us at this place tomorrow for council", the Sioux replied.

"We will", shouted Keokuk.

Then the four Sauks set out at a brisk canter for their camp. According to Keokuk, "They soon reached the high ground, wheeled their horses, and took a view of the Sioux as they retired. They discovered that the whole party of Sioux warriors had advanced against them, and were then slowly returning to their camp."

As they were returning home, Keokuk requested his faithful companions to explain to the chiefs and warriors what had taken place. They reached their encampment just as the sun was setting. While still at some distance their approach was discovered by Keokuk's favorite wife, who, contrary to orders and unknown to the camp, had mounted a swift horse, gone in pursuit, and returned in advance to give the news of their safe return. The four Sauks galloped into camp at a breakneck speed and were met by all the warriors. But Keokuk himself rode on to his own lodge at the farther end of the camp, threw himself from his horse, and was immediately surrounded by his wives and children.

Meanwhile the three young braves related to their fellow tribesmen what had taken place. "We are requested by Keokuk", they concluded, "to say that whatever you may determine upon he is ready to execute, but will give no opinion." The chiefs and warriors of the confederated tribes agreed upon meeting the Sioux in council the next day as Keokuk had promised. They then sent a messenger to inform him of their resolutions and to congratulate him upon his success.

The next morning Keokuk was mounted on his horse at the first streak of dawn. Mustering his men quickly the Sauk and Fox warriors took up the line of march toward the Sioux camp. A motley array of women and children brought up the rear. When they arrived on the hill overlooking the Sioux camp they all dismounted except Keokuk. The warriors gave their "looking glasses" to the women and boys, mounted them on their horses, and manoeuvred them so as to show a strong force. Then Keokuk, together with his chiefs, braves, and warriors, advanced on the Sioux village.

After crossing the creek, the Watchful Fox halted his party and advanced slowly with his chiefs. But it suddenly occurred to him that if the Sioux fired upon them, all the chiefs might be killed, while they were drawn up in battle order. Distrustful of such treachery, Keokuk requested the chiefs to halt while he alone advanced toward

the Sioux camp. He was well mounted on a proud charger that pranced and showed his rider to great advantage.

"On his near approach", Keokuk afterwards related, "he discovered that the advance line of Sioux warriors were painted black — and when about fifty yards off, the Sioux fired their guns in the air, grounded their arms, and threw down their powder horns." The Sioux chief advanced alone to meet him and shook hands. "They were old acquaintances," according to Keokuk, "having been to Washington city together. The whole party of Sioux now rushed up to shake hands with Ke-o-kuck, and his chiefs and warriors, who had all come up. The Sioux women running with their children on their backs, called aloud — 'We have made peace with the Sacs.' "

A large space had been cleared off by the Sioux for the reception of the Sauks and Foxes. Both tribes were ordered to arrange themselves in a line facing each other. As Keokuk related, "The high priest, or master of ceremonies, proceeded to the fire in the middle of the square, cut a slice of flesh from a *roasted dog!* went to the Sioux chief, and calling upon the Great Spirit to witness the sincerity of their hearts in making peace, placed it in his mouth. He then proceeded to Ke-o-kuck, and went through the same ceremony — and continued alternately, giving to the Sioux and Sacs and Foxes, until all had partaken of the sacred

morsel of consecrated meat — after which they were treated with a feast of buffalo meat and marrow bones — shook hands and parted."

Keokuk and his party returned to the creek where their women and children had made an encampment. Soon the Sioux warriors made their appearance, dancing around the Sauks and Foxes in a menacing manner. Unmoved by such a pantomime, the confederated tribesmen folded their arms, looking with utter contempt on the Sioux who presently returned to their camp. That evening the Sioux chieftain, with two of his followers, paid a visit to Keokuk and his chiefs.

Early the next morning Keokuk and his warriors, mounted and armed, rushed upon the Sioux camp, and surrounded it. With blood-curdling cries they dashed hither and yon, displaying feats of daring horsemanship as if in battle. They then dismounted and began to dance. This dramatic episode closed the ceremony between the hostile tribes. The Sioux promised to keep the peace four years while the confederated tribes consented to make peace but did not stipulate the length of time. The Sioux promptly broke camp and started westward to their own hunting grounds.

The Sauks and Foxes were free to continue their buffalo hunting unmolested. Although equipped with guns, most Indians considered it a greater honor to kill the buffalo with the time-honored weapons of their ancestors. Their skill

as hunters was revealed some years later, when Keokuk with a score of his chiefs and warriors were at the Stuyvesant Institute in New York City viewing some of George Catlin's paintings. As Catlin related: "I was exhibiting several of my paintings of buffalo-hunts, and describing the modes of slaying them with bows and arrows, when I made the assertion which I had often been in the habit of making, that there were many instances where the arrow was thrown entirely through the buffalo's body; and that I had several times witnessed this astonishing feat. I saw evidently by the motions of my audience, that many doubted the correctness of my assertion; and I appealed to *Kee-o-kuk*, who rose up when the thing was explained to him, and said, that it had repeatedly happened amongst his tribe; and he believed that one of his young men by his side had done it. The young man instantly stepped up on the bench, and took a bow from under his robe, with which he told the audience he had driven his arrow quite through a buffalo's body." Such exploits may have occurred in the great hunt of 1833.

Day after day the hunters returned to their camp with trophies of their success. With but slight variations it may be said tribal regulation governed the cutting up and distribution of the various parts of the buffalo. The skin and certain parts of the carcass usually belonged to the hunter

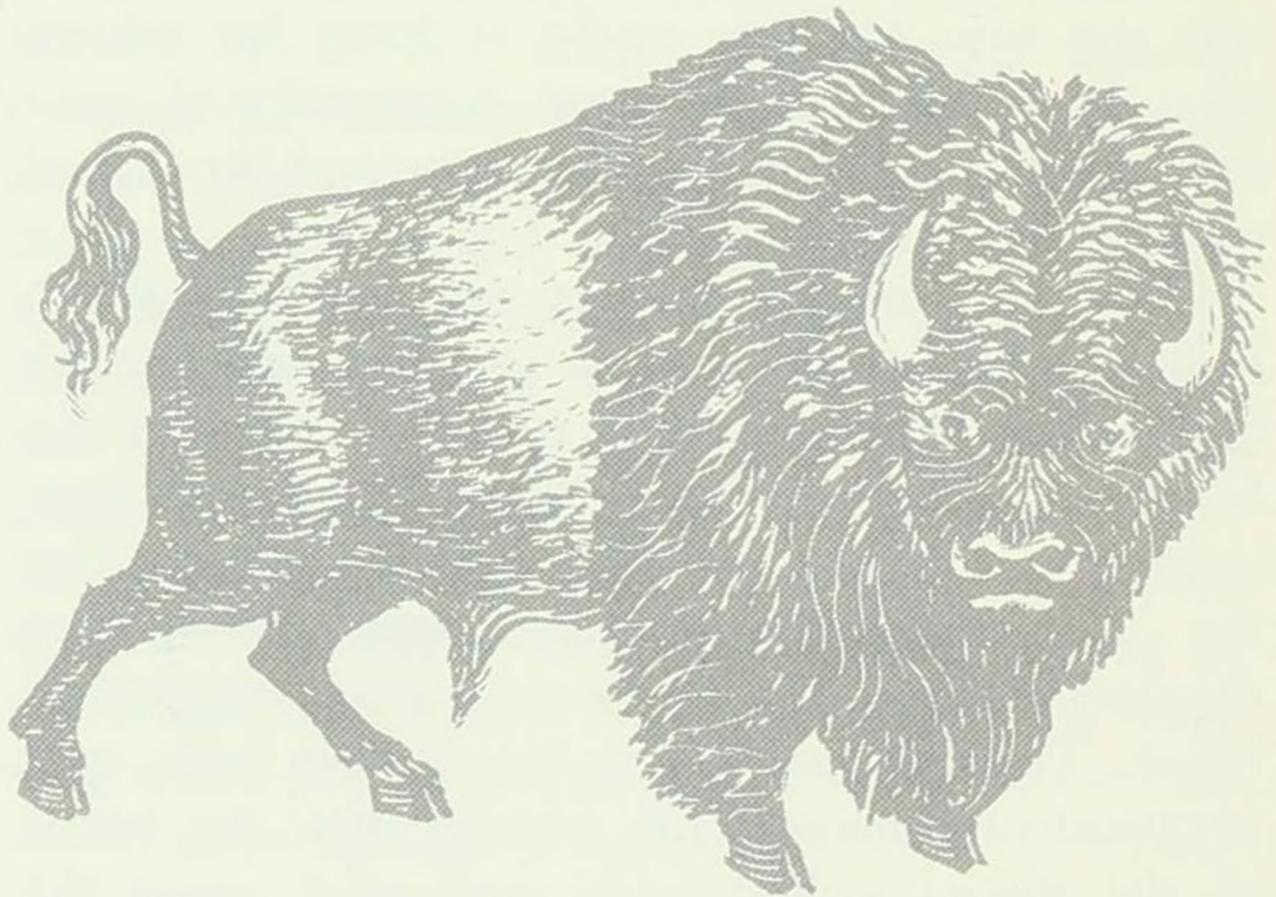
who made the kill. The remainder was divided among the helpers, thereby giving the poor and disabled an opportunity to procure food. The butchering was usually done by the men on the field, each hunter's portion being taken to his tent and given to the women as their property. The squaws then cut the meat into thin slices and strips and hung these on a framework of poles to dry in the sun. When fully "jerked" the meat was put into rawhide packs to keep for winter use. In addition to the meat, a quantity of marrow was preserved in bladder skins and the tallow was poured into skin bags.

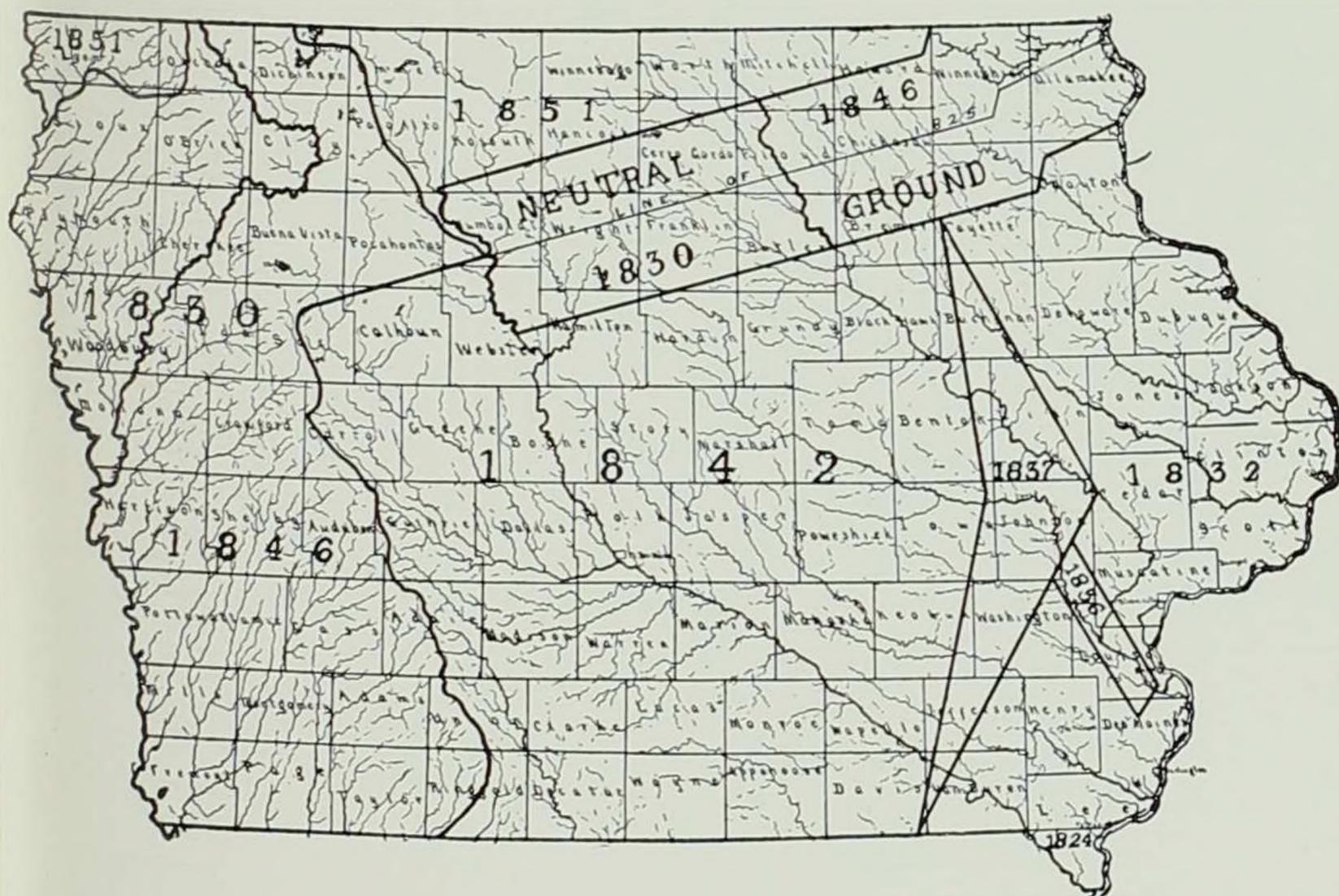
Very little of the carcass was wasted by the Indians who hunted in what is now Iowa, for the buffalo was by no means as plentiful as across the Missouri River. The sinew furnished bow strings, threads for sewing, and fiber for ropes; the horns were manufactured into spoons and drinking vessels, and often worn as an insignia of office. The hair was woven into lariats, belts, and personal ornaments. No wonder that the tribes of the plains looked with veneration upon the shaggy bison.

The Sauks and Foxes remained at their camp until they had killed eighty buffalo. They then began their long trek down the Iowa River to their villages near the Mississippi. The thanksgiving ceremony must have been truly impressive for enough meat had been gathered during Chief

Keokuk's successful Buffalo hunt in northern Iowa to insure that no one would go hungry during the long winter months that lay ahead.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN





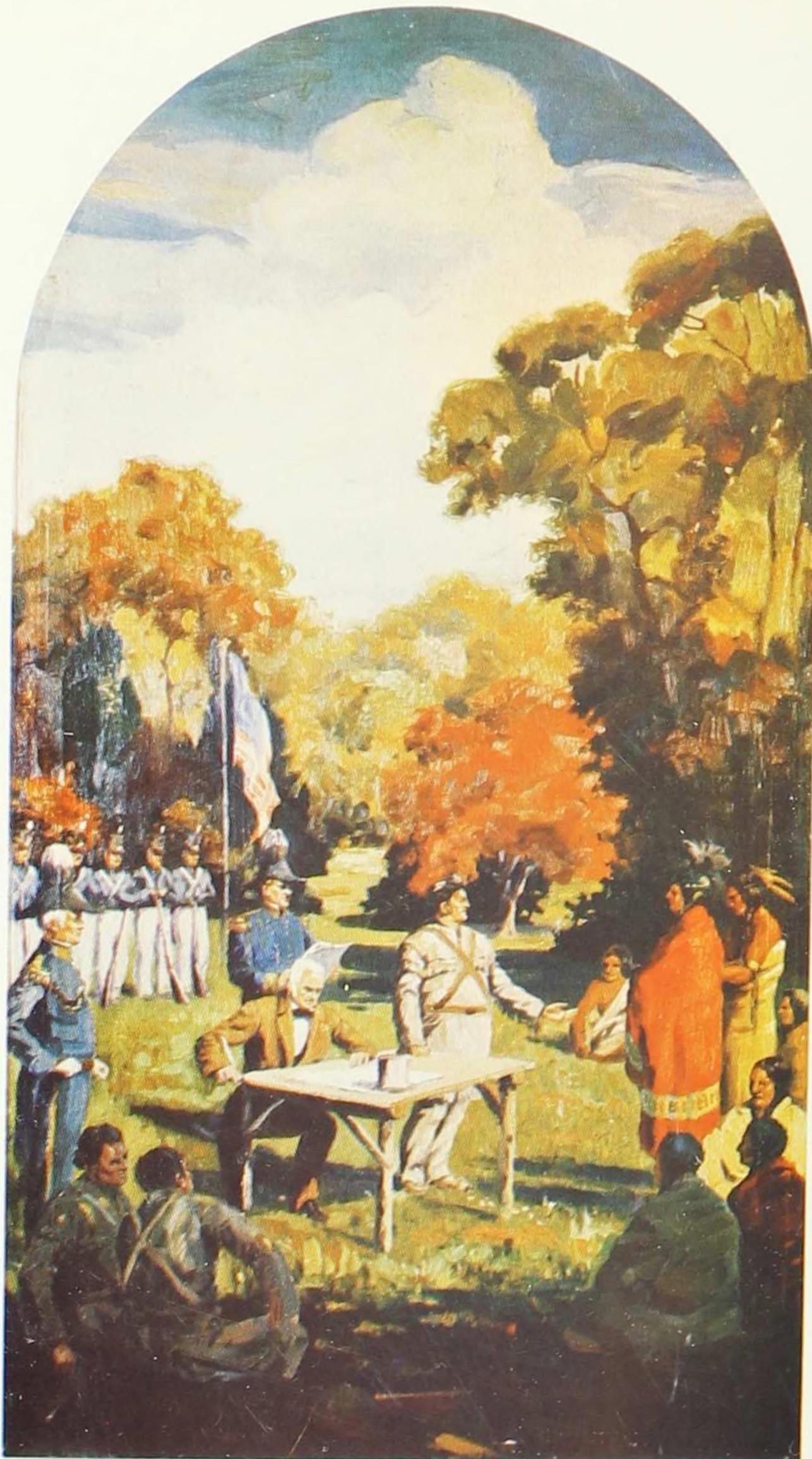
INDIAN LAND CESSIONS IN IOWA

The name of Keokuk is associated with many Indian treaties dealing directly with Iowa. On September 3, 1822, Keokuk and seven Sauk and Fox Chiefs signed an agreement at Fort Armstrong absolving the United States from building a trading post or factory in their midst, as had been stipulated in the treaty of 1804. On August 4, 1824, Keokuk affixed his mark to the treaty creating the Halfbreed Tract in Lee County. One year later, on August 19, 1825, Keokuk signed the treaty creating the Neutral Line to separate the Sauk and Fox from their enemies—the Sioux. On July 15, 1830, Keokuk and a dozen other Sauks signed a treaty creating the Neutral Ground in Northeastern Iowa. Both these treaties were negotiated and signed at Prairie du Chien.

On September 21, 1832, Keokuk negotiated the Black Hawk Purchase resulting in the first cession of land in Iowa. The negotiations took place on the present site of Davenport but the treaty was signed at Fort Armstrong on Rock Island. In previous treaties the name Keokuk, variously spelled, was translated to mean "Watchful Fox" but in 1832 it was translated to mean "He who has been every where." Four hundred sections of land along the Iowa River were awarded to Keokuk by the United States for restraining three fourths of the Sauk and Fox from entering the Black Hawk War.

On September 28, 1836, Governor Henry Dodge completed negotiations with the Sauk and Fox for the cession of the 400 sections constituting the Keokuk Reserve. On October 21, 1837, Keokuk—"The Watchful Fox, principal chief of the confederated tribes"—agreed with 22 other chiefs to the Second Purchase, representing 1,250,000 acres of land directly west of the Black Hawk Purchase. The negotiations took place in Washington, D.C.

Finally, on October 11, 1842, Governor John Chambers concluded at the Sauk and Fox Agency a treaty whereby all of central Iowa was ceded and the confederated tribes agreed to move to Kansas. It was the last treaty signed by Keokuk in Iowa.



General Winfield Scott Negotiating the Black Hawk Purchase
on present Site of Davenport