

Indians at Boston

Yesterday, October 30, 1837, was made a general holiday, and nearly all the citizens, with great numbers from the neighboring towns, turned out to witness the reception of the party of fifty Sac, Fox, Sioux, and Ioway Indians at the State House, and their performance of the war dance on the Common. The whole proceedings were uncommonly interesting.

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, they held a levee in Faneuil Hall for the ladies only, and were visited by crowds of the fairer portion of creation. They were then escorted to the Representatives' hall in the State House by the National Lancers, and received by Governor Edward Everett in the presence of nearly all the State and city officers. Great numbers of ladies were in the galleries, which presented a very brilliant appearance, while a large concourse of gentlemen occupied the floor.

The Indians took their seats on the center benches, and were addressed by the Governor as follows:

Chiefs and warriors of the united Sacs and Foxes: You are welcome to our hall of council. You have

[This account of the visit of about fifty representative Indians from the Territory of Iowa to the city of Boston while on a tour of the East in the fall of 1837, after attending a peace council in Washington, is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from *Niles' National Register*, Vol. 53, p. 166. It appeared originally in the *Boston Atlas* on October 31, 1837.—THE EDITOR]

come a far way from your homes in the West to visit your white brethren. We are glad to take you by the hand. We have heard before of the Sacs and Foxes; our travellers have told us the names of their great men and chiefs. We are glad to see them with our own eyes.

We, brothers, are called the "Massachusetts". It was the name of the red men who once lived here. In former times, the red man's wigwam stood on these fields, and his council fire was kindled on this spot. When our fathers came over the great water, they were a small band. The red man stood on the rock by the sea side, and looked at them. He might have pushed them into the water, and drowned them, but took hold of their hands, and said "Welcome, white men!" Our fathers were hungry, and the red man gave them corn and venison; our fathers were cold, and the red man spread his blanket over them, and made them warm. We are now grown great and powerful, but we remember the kindness of the red man to our fathers.

Brothers, our faces are pale, and yours are red, but our hearts are alike. The Great Spirit made his children of different complexions, but he loves them all. Brothers, you dwell between the Mississippi and the Missouri; they are mighty streams. They have great arms; one stretching out east, and one away off to the west, as far as the Rocky Mountains; but they make but one river, and run together into the sea. Brothers, we dwell at the east, and you live

in the far west, but we are of one family; it has many branches, but one head.

Brothers, as you passed through the hall below, you stopped to look at the image of our great father, Washington. It is but a cold stone, and can not speak to you; but our great father Washington loved his red children, and bade us love them also. He is dead, but his words have made a great print in our hearts, like the step of a strong buffalo on the clay of the prairie.

My brother, (addressing Keokuk), I perceive by your side your young child, whom I saw at the council hall the other day sitting between your knees. May the Great Spirit preserve the life of your son. May he grow up by your side like the tender sapling by the side of the mighty oak. May you long flourish together; and when the mighty oak is fallen in the forest, may the young tree take its place, and spread out its branches over the tribe. Brothers, I make you a short talk, and bid you welcome once more to our council hall.

This address was translated to the Indians by the interpreters, and received by them with the usual guttural exclamations.

Keokuk replied to his excellency in the following words:

I am very much gratified to have the pleasure of shaking hands with the great chief of the State and the chiefs who surround him. The remark you made just now, that the Great Spirit made both of us,

though your skin is white and mine red, is true. He made our hearts alike. The only difference is, that he made you to speak one language and me another. He made us hands to take each other by, and eyes to see each other. Brother, I am very happy to be able to say before I die, that I have been to the house where your fathers used to speak with ours, as we now do with you; and I hope the Great Spirit is pleased at this sight. I hope he will long keep friendship between the white and red man. I hope that he sees us, and that our hearts are friendly to each other. My remarks are short, and I shall say no more, but take all our friends here by the hand, and hope that the Great Spirit will bless them.

Wapello, a principal chief, followed Keokuk.

I am very happy to meet my friends in the land of our forefathers. I recollect, when a little boy, of hearing my grandfather say that at this place the red man first took the white man by the hand. I am very happy that this island can sustain so many white men as have come on to it; I am glad that they can find a living, and happy that they can be contented with living on it. I am always glad to give the white man my hand, and call him brother. I am glad to hear the white man call us his brethren. It is true that he is the older of the two, but where I live my tribe is the oldest among the red men. I have shaken hands with many different tribes of people, and am very much gratified that I have lived to come and talk with the white man of his fathers

in this great house. I shall go home, and tell my brothers that I have been to this great place, and it shall not be forgotten by me or my children.

Then spoke Waucoshaushe, a Fox war chief, who had been severely wounded during the previous summer in a fight with the Sioux west of the west fork of the Cedar River in the Neutral Ground, probably in what is now Butler County.

I have just listened to the remarks made by you and my chiefs about our forefathers. I have been wishing to see the shore where my fathers took the white man by the hand, and I shall not forget it. My friends are much pleased with your greeting. May the Great Spirit take pity on all of us, and may we live brethren, as did my fathers and yours when they first landed on this shore.

Poweshiek, another principal chief of the Foxes, added his felicitations.

You have heard what my chiefs have to say. They are much gratified with their visit to this town. They were invited to the council house of my brother on Saturday, and to-day they are brought to this council hall. They are much pleased with these attentions, and will not forget them. Though I am not now able to reward you for these kindnesses I hope the Great Spirit will reward you for them. This is the place where our tribe once lived. I have often heard my father and grandfather say that they once lived by the sea coast where the white man first came. I wish I had a book, and could read in it all

these things. I have been told that that is the way you get all your knowledge. As far as I can understand the language of the white people it appears to me that the Americans have reached a high stand among the white people — that very few could overpower them. It is the same with regard to us — though I say it. Where I live I am looked up to by others, and they all respect me. I am very happy that two great men like you and I should meet and shake hands together.

The remaining civil chiefs then shook hands with the Governor, and afterward the war chiefs, who are entirely distinct from the former. One of the latter — we forget his Indian name, but it was the one who wears the buffalo skin and horns [Kishkekosh] — said to the Governor:

I am much pleased with the conversation our chiefs have had with you. I am glad that you noticed Musanwont, Keokuk's son; he will succeed his father and be a chief. The chiefs who have spoken to you are all village chiefs. For my part, I have nothing to do with the villages, but I go to war and fight for the women and children.

Appanoose, a principal Sac chief, arose.

I am very happy to shake hands with you; I do it with all my heart. I have long wished to come to the village where once the red and white men used to speak together. My brother who spoke last has told you the truth; he has nothing to do with the villages, but fights for the women and children. Although we

have no paper to put your words down we shall not forget this good council, nor the remarks of our friends. In my tribe I am ranked among the braves, and I have my arms in my hands. They are all my defence, and I like them very much. I wish to leave them in this house so the white man will remember the red man of the far west. My present may not be agreeable, but it is made with a good heart.

So saying he took off his arms, wampum belt, moccasins, and all the articles of his dress except the blanket, and laid them on the table before the Governor.

Then the celebrated Black Hawk addressed the assembly.

I like very well to hear you talk of the Great Spirit. He made us both of one heart, though your skin is white and mine red. When the first white men came on to the island, we thought they were French. They were our brothers, as you are. Your heart is white, and so is mine. On our journey your white brothers hung round our necks white medals such as the French gave us. The Great Spirit is pleased at our talking together to-day. I have lived for a long time between the Mississippi and Missouri. I like to hear you talk of them. I have got to be old. You are a man, and so am I, and that is the reason we talk together as brothers. I can not shake hands with all my friends in particular, but by shaking hands with you I shall with them.

Keokuk presented his son, Musanwont, to the

Governor, saying that he was young, but he had a heart, and would not forget what had passed on this occasion.

The Governor then presented his son to Musanwont, and they shook hands together.

Another chief, whose name was not recorded, spoke last.

Brother, I wish to give you the pipe of a chief. I leave it for you to remember me by. I am happy that our chiefs have had this conversation with their white brother. I am part white myself; my father was a Frenchman. He is now an old man, and has put me in his place, and I am a brave among my tribe. He has often told me of the place where the white man first landed. It was not so old a story then as it is now. I am very happy to see you and take you by the hand in this great council house of your forefathers. I leave you the pipe and my club as an evidence of my rank.

Governor Everett requested the interpreter to say to the chiefs that their white brethren had listened to their speeches with great satisfaction. He thanked them for their gifts, in exchange for which he should have the pleasure of offering them some white men's arms, and some small articles of dress for the women and children — perhaps of little value in themselves, but which, he hoped, would be received as tokens of friendship and good will.

The company then proceeded to the balcony in front of the State House, where the Governor pre-

sented each of the warriors a sword, a pair of pistols, and a blanket, and the women some bright shawls and trinkets. He also gave Keokuk's son a beautiful little rifle, remarking, as he did so, that he hoped he would soon be able to shoot buffaloes with it.

The view from this balcony was beautiful in the extreme. Thousands upon thousands were collected in the court yard of the building, on the Common — which was nearly filled from Park to West streets — and in the streets, while the windows and roof of every house affording a prospect of the scene were filled with spectators, a great part being ladies.

After showing themselves to the multitude, the Indians partook of a collation in the Senate chamber, and were then escorted to the Common, where they performed a war dance to the gratification of the assemblage. They were afterwards conducted to their lodgings, at Concert Hall, where Keokuk and Black Hawk addressed the crowd in front of the building. In the evening, they visited the Tremont Theater.

Every thing went off without injury to life or limb, though, from the immense crowd present, we should not have been surprised had the contrary been the fact. The military made a fine appearance. The National Lancers, from being mounted, attracted the principal attention of the Indians.

The delegation left Boston at noon on the following day, bound for New York.