The Palimpsest

SEPTEMBER 1925

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT IOWA CITY IOWA
UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials 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 records 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.

PRICE—10c per copy: $1 per year: free to members of Society
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

VOL. VI ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER 1925 NO. 9

The Great Council of 1825

On the afternoon of August 19, 1925, men and women dressed in the colorful garb of Indian chiefs, braves, and squaws reënacted on the Heights above McGregor, Iowa, scenes from the great council between white men and red men held at Prairie du Chien one hundred years ago. Because their forefathers had signed the celebrated treaty of 1825, Chief Kahquados and Sub-chief Mitchell of the Pottawattamies, and Wampum, a Chippewa chief, travelled many miles to take part in the centenary pageant. Dressed in all their finery, these chiefs and a goodly number of Winnebago braves and maidens took dignified part in the ceremonials of the afternoon. A huge crowd witnessed the unfolding of the drama where Sauks, Foxes, and Chippewas scowled at their enemy, the Sioux, and the proud Sioux flung back the hostile challenge. The visitors listened while "General Clark" and "Governor

Cass" explained anew the desires and good intentions of the Great Father at Washington and the make-believe chiefs made glowing replies. The pageant closed as the treaty of peace was signed, and the calumet was smoked to seal the agreement.

The Heights where the pageant was staged "overlooks the Wisconsin prairie" where thousands of Sioux, Chippewa, Menominee, Winnebago, Ottawa, Pottawattamie, Ioway, Sauk, and Fox Indians "assembled in that long ago day to establish boundaries which would stop the warring of the tribes among themselves." With the scenes of the afternoon pageant fresh in mind it was not difficult for the visitor on the Heights that evening to picture in imagination the panorama of a century ago. As the sun dipped from a limpid sky into a gold-washed world to the west, shadows half obscured the houses in the town of Prairie du Chien. There was the isle-strewn expanse of the Mississippi River below, and in the distance towered scalloped bluffs that hemmed in the long narrow prairie. In the gathering darkness clumps of trees on the islands in the river and the roofs of houses in the distant town were readily transformed into high-pointed tepees of the red men of long ago.

The council of 1825 was an earnest effort to induce the Indians of the Upper Mississippi Valley to bury the tomahawk and to agree to confine their excursions in search of game within specified boundaries. The government desired especially to put an end to

the bitter Sioux-Chippewa feuds and to the bloody clashes between the Sioux and the allied tribes of Sauks and Foxes in the Iowa country.

In many respects this treaty council was one of the most imposing ever held with the red men. To this meeting there came not only the chiefs, principal men, and warriors of the tribes but their families as well. And many a town or county in Iowa, as well as in other States of the Upper Mississippi Valley, bears the name of some Indian who affixed his mark to the treaty of 1825 — Decorah, Tama, Keokuk, and Mahaska for example.

From the region near the Falls of St. Anthony came Indian Agent Lawrence Taliaferro with almost four hundred Sioux and Chippewas. From the distant Sault Ste. Marie, by way of Lake Michigan and the Fox-Wisconsin waterway, the scholarly Henry Schoolcraft brought one hundred and fifty Chippewas, "the brothers of Hiawatha". Nicolas Boilvin of Prairie du Chien was there with hundreds of Winnebagoes from the Wisconsin country roundabout. And from Rock Island came Thomas Forsyth, the capable agent of the Sauks and Foxes. Sub-agents Robert Forsyth and W. B. Alexander, the Scotchman, completed the roster of white ambassadors of the Indian tribes. Major Thomas Biddle, the secretary, from whose journal much of the material for this sketch was obtained, added distinction to the assemblage. Then there were the two United States commissioners, General William

Clark of St. Louis, the "Red Head Chief" whom the Indians admired, and Governor Lewis Cass of Detroit who had asked permission of the government to participate in the council.

It was first proposed to hold the council near Fort Armstrong on Rock Island but the Indians preferred Prairie du Chien. This village and prairie had long been known as a neutral spot where tribesmen might assemble under a temporary truce. The date of the meeting was placed later in the season, too, than was originally planned, for the Indians wished to wait until their summer hunt was ended.

A keelboat containing provisions and presents for the Indians left St. Louis on June 30, 1825, bound up-stream for the conference. It contained rations valued at $6,750 for an estimated crowd of two thousand Indians, and presents of tobacco, salt, sugar, guns, powder, lead, and liquor to the amount of $2000. Clark had further estimated that the pay of extra interpreters, expresses, and hired men would require $750, and that the cost of transporting supplies, presents, and these men to Prairie du Chien would take $400 more. An additional $500 was allowed for subsistence and contingent expenses of Indian agents, interpreters, and other men employed during the time of the council — a total cost of $10,400. Even this amount Clark deemed inadequate, as the association of Governor Cass as commissioner would probably increase the number of tribesmen for whom provision must be made. He assured

the Secretary of War, however, that all possible economy would be used in the conduct of the council.

Clark and Biddle left St. Louis on July 6th and caught up with the keelboat at Clarksville three days later. Not for ten years had Clark visited the Upper Mississippi region, but few changes were encountered along the river. Eight days passed before the boat reached Fort Edwards on the Illinois shore. There Clark found White Cloud and several other principal men of the Ioways who claimed that their sub-agent had told them to meet the "Red Head Chief" at this place. Much provoked at this unauthorized advice of their agent the General gave the Ioways a barrel of pork and another of biscuits, and borrowed a canoe from the American Fur Company for their transportation to Prairie du Chien. White Cloud asked him also to pay for a beef which had been killed for the Ioways while they were awaiting the arrival of the White Chief.

The next day Clark stopped at the tent of the fur trader, Maurice Blondeau, on the Iowa side of the "Rapides des Moines". There he found another party of Ioways en route overland for the council. Before departing Clark gave White Cloud a rifle and some powder, together with a note to Agent Forsyth at Rock Island to furnish the Ioways some provisions. The "Red Head Chief" also, probably reluctantly, paid twenty-five dollars to the owner of the beef killed for the Ioways at Fort Edwards.

On to Rock Island, from which Colonel George

Davenport shipped his furs to St. Louis and to which he brought twice a year a hundred thousand dollars worth of goods for his trading post, Clark and his party proceeded. The Sauks and Foxes, the General learned, were to leave for the Prairie in two days, and Agent Forsyth a day later. Farther up the river the party passed the place where Julien Dubuque "lay in perpetual state on his hills".

Toward sundown on the evening of July 30th, the General and his men drew near Prairie du Chien. "The Great Chief, the Red Head is coming", whispered the Indians, as Clark's barge hove in sight.

"Prairie du Chien was alive with excitement". Governor Cass who had come by the Great Lakes and Fox-Wisconsin route had been there for ten days. Schoolcraft with his delegation from Sault Ste. Marie was there, and Taliaferro with his interpreters and assistants had already arrived with the Sioux and Chippewas from the north. The united tribesmen, Clark learned, had stopped at the Painted Rock above the Prairie and had "dressed for a solemn entry with as much care as an ambassador and his suite would have taken at the court of the Grand Monarque. When all was ready, the boats, arranged in columns, swept down with flags flying, drums beating, and guns firing, and rounded up at the levee at Fort Crawford in imposing array." Not only the village, but the entire banks of the river for miles above and below were covered with high-pointed buffalo tents. "Tall and warlike, Chippewas and

Winnebagoes from Superior and the valley of St. Croix jostled Menomonees, Pottawattamies, and Ottawas'' from Lake Michigan and Green Bay.

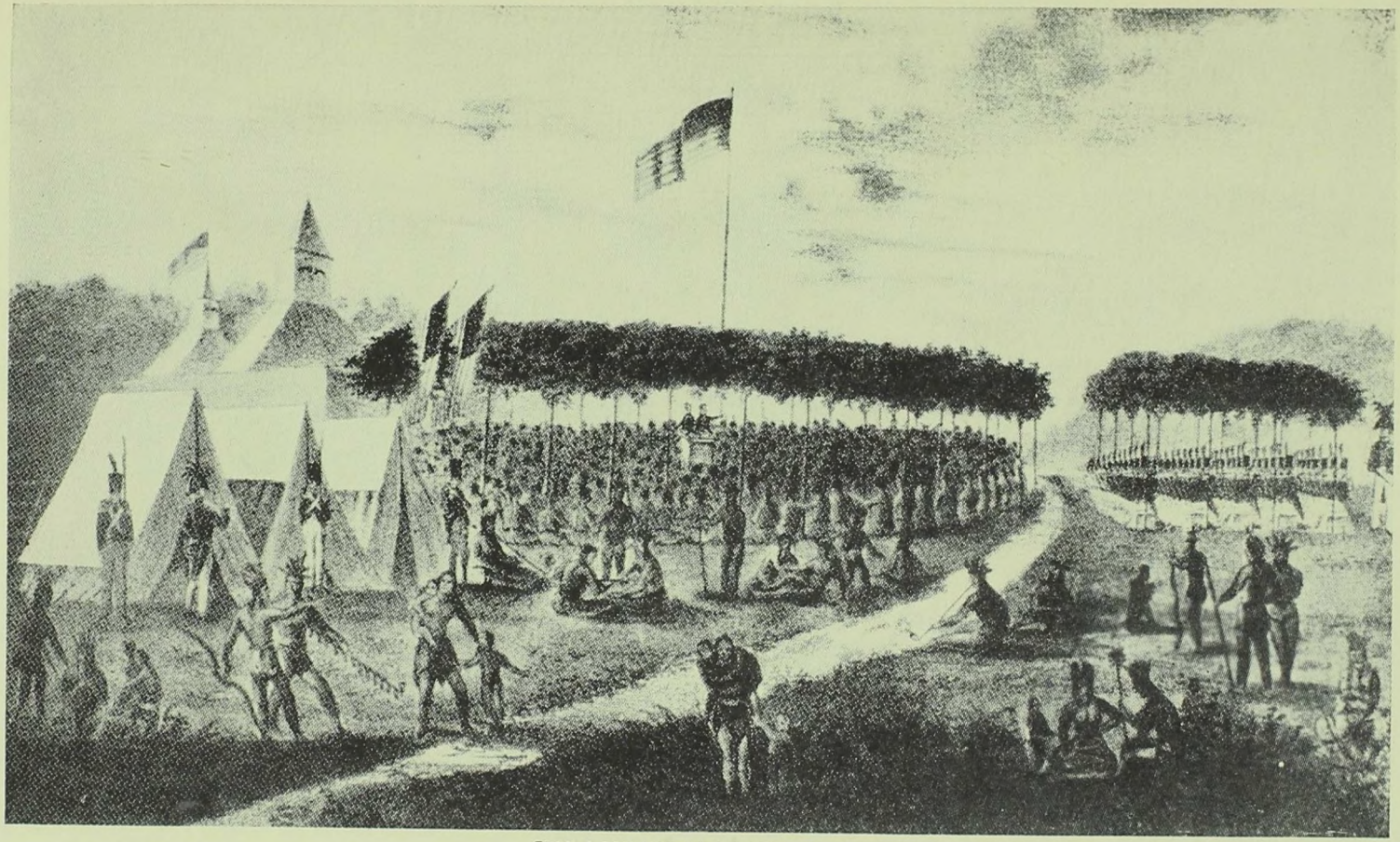
The Sioux Indians were a picturesque group. They carried war clubs and lances decorated with almost every imaginable device of paint. ''Wanita, the Yankton chief, had a most magnificent robe of the buffalo, curiously worked with dyed porcupines' quills and sweet grass.'' Their calumets of red pipestone from the famous Minnesota quarries were very elaborate. These pipes, curiously carved and fitted with flat wooden handles four feet long, were ''ornamented with the scalps of red-headed woodpecker and male duck, and tail feathers of birds artificially attached by strings and quill work, so as to hang in the figure of a quadrant.'' Dyed porcupine quills arranged as a kind of mosaic added a colorful touch to the personal embellishment of the braves.

The opening of the council was delayed until the Sauks, Foxes, and Ioways should arrive. On the fourth of August they were sighted approaching in a flotilla of some seventy canoes. They had stopped on an island down-stream to array themselves in their finery, and in compact formation, singing their war songs, they swept up the river past the village and back again. At the landing they were greeted as brothers by the Chippewas, but the Sioux stood apart scowling.

As the prairie was already well filled with the tepees of the earlier arrivals, these tribes encamped

on the large island in midstream and on the opposite shore — the present site of McGregor. "They came to the treaty ground", says Schoolcraft, "armed and dressed as a war party." Many of the warriors had a long tuft of red horse hair tied at their elbows, and wore a necklace of grizzly bear claws. "Their head-dress consisted of red dyed horse-hair, tied in such manner to the scalp lock as to present the shape of the decoration of a Roman helmet." Except for the scalp lock their heads were shaved and painted. They were practically naked. The print of a hand, in white clay, commonly marked the back or shoulders. A long iron-shod lance was carried in the hand by some; others were armed with clubs, guns, and knives. Keokuk, their leader, stood as a prince "majestic and frowning."

At last all was ready for the council. A bower of trees with a raised platform for the commissioners had been erected near Fort Crawford for the assemblage. At ten o'clock on the morning of August 5th the firing of a gun at the fort summoned the braves to the council. The members of the commission took their place on the raised platform. In a semi-circle in front of them sat the gay-clad chiefs and principal men of the tribes, back of them the braves, and on the fringe of the great concourse were the squaws and children. On long benches at one side of the circle of Indians sat the soldiers from the fort, resplendent in their high bell-crowned "tarbucket" hats with white pompons, tight-fitting blue jacket



FROM A PAINTING BY J. O. LEWIS AS REPRODUCED IN QUAIFE'S WISCONSIN: ITS HISTORY AND ITS PEOPLE

THE GREAT COUNCIL OF 1825

coats with white crossed breast belts, and white trousers. Behind them sat the wives of officers and other ladies of Prairie du Chien. Back of the assemblage was old Fort Crawford whose loop-holed walls and two turret-crowned blockhouses reminded the savages of the long arm of the Great Father. It was a picture for an artist, and fortunately an artist, James O. Lewis, was present to catch and preserve the details of the scene.

"Friends and children", said General Clark to the assembled Indians, "we have been directed by your Great Father, *your* President of the United States, to meet you here in council at this time, and we are rejoiced that the Great Spirit has enabled you all to arrive here in peace and safety. He has given us a clear day and we hope he has opened your ears and will prepare your heart for the good work before us."

Grunts of approval and shouts from the Indians greeted this statement. Clark had apparently made a favorable beginning.

"Children", he continued, "your Great Father has not sent us here to ask anything from you. We want nothing, not the smallest piece of your land. Not a single article of your property. We have come a great way to meet you for your own good and not for our benefit. Your Great Father has been informed that war is carried on among his red children, the Sauks, Foxes, and Chippewas on the one side and the Sioux on the other; and that the wars

of some of you began before any of you now living were born."

Again the Indians interrupted with shouts and yells.

"Your Great Father thinks there is no cause for a continuation of war between you. There is land enough for you to live and hunt on and animals enough for your support. Why, instead of peaceably following the game and providing for your families, do you send out war parties to destroy one another? The Great Spirit has made you all of one colour and placed you all upon this land. You ought to live in peace together as brothers of one great family. Your Great Father has heard of your war songs and war parties — they do not please him. He desires that his red children should bury the tomahawk."

General Clark then explained that hostilities among the Indians had resulted mainly from the lack of definite boundaries for the hunting grounds. Intent upon the chase, braves had often followed game into the lands claimed by other tribes, and trouble had always followed. Shouts and nods met this assertion.

In conclusion the General reminded the Indians that they had assembled under the protection of their Great Father, and cautioned them that blood must not be spilt. "Whoever injures either of you injures us", he said, "and we shall punish him as we would punish one of our own people." He ended his speech by saying, "Children, you can take time

to consider these subjects and when you are prepared to give an answer we shall be ready to hear you."

The pipe was then smoked and after passing it around to each individual the ashes were thrown into the council fire. The council then adjourned until ten o'clock the next morning. Rations of beef, bread, corn, salt, sugar, tobacco, and a little liquor were distributed, and the Indians ate until not a scrap of food remained.

At ten o'clock the next morning the council reassembled, and the chiefs gave voice to their thoughts. Said one Fox chief, "My Fathers, I am glad to see all my relations these red skins assembled together. I was glad to hear what you said yesterday; how could it be otherwise when what you said were my own thoughts."

Monga Zid from Fond du Lac spoke. "When I heard the voice of my Father coming up the Mississippi, calling me to this treaty, it seemed as a murmuring wind; I got up from my mat where I sat musing and hastened to obey it. My pathway has been clear and bright. Truly it is a pleasant sky above our heads this day. There is not a cloud to darken it. I hear nothing but pleasant words."

But Shinguaba W'Ossin, first chief of the Chippewas, sounded a discordant note. "My Fathers have taken a great deal of trouble to collect their red children together and to keep them in peace. But I am afraid it will not be good. The young men are

bad and hard to govern." And The Wind, another Chippewa chief, exclaimed, "I wish to live in peace. But in running marks around our country or in giving it to our enemies it may make new disturbances and breed wars."

Proud Keokuk, the Sauk, declared, "My Fathers, I am glad to see you all here; my great wish is accomplished in meeting you all together." And he added that the idea of establishing a boundary line was agreeable to the thoughts and wishes of his people.

Wabasha, the Sioux, spoke in a similar vein. "My Fathers, I am pleased at the prospect of peace, and was glad to smoke the pipe and throw the remains into the fire. When the peace is made I hope it is a lasting one."

In the name of the commissioners, Governor Cass told the chiefs of the pleasure with which they had heard all that had been said except some of the remarks of the Chippewas. "We tell you again", he said, "the Great Father does not want your land. He wants to establish boundaries and peace among you. We have no disposition to hurry you." But he added, "No more whiskey will be issued until the business of this great council is finished — at the conclusion of the business a great feast will be given to you all."

The council then adjourned until Monday when the chiefs began to describe the boundaries of their land. White Cloud, the Ioway chief, declared: "My

Fathers, I claim no lands in particular. The land I live on is enough to furnish my women and children. I go upon the land of our friends the Sauks and Foxes — we alternately go upon each others land. We have but one council fire and eat out of the same dish." It was for Keokuk, then, to bound the realm of the Sauks and Foxes. "We claim the Fork of the Calumet [Big Sioux] River. It is unnecessary to say by what title we claim it — you know we got it. This is the line for which my mouth has spoken so much."

The debate grew animated as it was seen that the boundaries between the tribes crossed and re-crossed. Days passed as the Indians wrangled over conflicting claims. "These are the cause of all your troubles", said Clark. He insisted that it would be better for each to give up some disputed territory than to be fighting forever about it.

For days the Sioux and the Sauks and Foxes argued as to what point on the Missouri River should be the western end of their boundary. According to the treaty that was finally adopted, the line which was supposed to keep these warring tribes apart in the Iowa country was described as "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."

At last the various disputes were adjusted, and on August 19th, 1825, the celebrated treaty embodying these agreements was signed by all, the wampum belt was passed, and the calumet was smoked as a solemn pledge that the war tomahawk was buried "never to be raised again as long as the trees grow or the waters of the River continue to run."

On the next day copies of the treaty of peace were delivered to each band of Indians, again the pipe of peace was passed, presents were exchanged, and a great feast concluded the ceremony. The small amount of liquor that had been doled out during the council led to much grumbling on the part of the Indians and the expression of opinion that the white chiefs were stingy. To disabuse the red men of this idea several kettles were filled with liquor and, after suitable remarks, the contents of each kettle was spilled out on the ground — a loss ill relished by the Indians. One chief is reported to have said that enough liquor was lost to keep him drunk all the rest of his life.

Group by group the Indians departed, Cass and Clark with their assistants took boat for home, and the soldiers of Fort Crawford returned to the dull routine of garrison duty. The great council at Prairie du Chien was over.

Bruce E. Mahan

The Old Pottawattamie Mill

When my father moved to Council Bluffs early in June, 1853, I was a boy only ten years old. At that time the town was a straggling frontier village, founded by the Mormons in 1846 and boomed by the gold rush of 'forty-nine. Only a row of frame store buildings with square fronts lined the one principal street, and the Missouri River was about three miles away across the sunflower-covered bottoms. It seems to me now, as I recall those early days, that one of the most interesting places in or near town was the old Pottawattamie mill, located about three miles to the northeast, then in the heyday of its existence. There, as a boy, I frequently went fishing in Mosquito Creek and swimming in the mill pond. Through these excursions I became intimately acquainted with the miller, Stutely E. Wicks, and his family. Being greatly interested in the old mill and its history, I often went through the establishment with Mr. Wicks and was thoroughly familiar with its operation.

The story really begins in 1830, when, on July 25th, the Sauk, Fox, Ioway, Oto, Missouri, and Sioux Indians, who then occupied the western half of the present State of Iowa as a common hunting ground, ceded this territory to the United States, though by the terms of the treaty the tribes were permitted to continue to use the lands as hunting grounds until

the government should locate other Indians thereon or dispose of the same in some other manner.

By a treaty made at Chicago on September 26 and 27, 1833, several scattering bands of Pottawattamie, Chippewa, and Ottawa Indians in Illinois and Indiana, who had not been removed under previous treaties, surrendered their occupancy of lands in those States and consented to removal west of the Mississippi River. At that time the intention of the government seems to have been to settle them, together with others of their people, upon lands which afterward became a part of the State of Kansas; but for some reason the plan was changed and it was decided to locate these bands upon a portion of the lands — about five million acres — acquired under the provisions of the treaty of 1830, in southwestern Iowa. Removal progressed during the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, but the main body of the Indians did not reach their proper destination until late in July of the latter year. The headquarters of these people, as shown by the records in the Office of Indian Affairs at Washington, were established July 29, 1837, "on the left bank of the Missouri river fifteen or eighteen miles above the mouth of the Great Platte river", where a blockhouse about twenty-five feet square was erected for their protection. For twenty years this old log structure stood "upon the plateau crowning the blunt nose of the hill" which towered over Broadway between the present-day Grace and Union streets, serving first as a fort and later as a

Jesuit mission founded by Father Pierre Jean De Smet in 1838.

The Indians located in small villages well over the south half of the area of lands allotted to them. Fear of the Sioux to the north and west caused the limitation in occupancy. The leaders among the tribal chieftains were Billy Caldwell, Joseph Laframboise, Bigfoot, and Wabaunsee, the latter being the ablest warrior of the Pottawattamies. These men held sway in the four principal villages.

Caldwell, who appears to have been the dominant chief, located his band near the blockhouse. Sagaunash, his Indian name, is translated "Englishman". He is said to have been the offspring of an Irish officer in the British service and a Pottawattamie woman. He was well educated, reading and writing both French and English and master of several Indian dialects. During the War of 1812, he is reputed to have been secretary to Tecumseh.

Laframboise and his band located about eight miles southwest of Caldwell's village, at a place known to the French trappers and traders as Point aux Poules. It was afterward called Traders Point and, for a short time, Council Bluffs, being situated opposite the headquarters of the Indian Agency of the Council Bluffs at Bellevue. He, as his name implies, was of French extraction and a member of a very large family of Indian mixed bloods. Being fairly well educated, he frequently served as official interpreter for the Indian agents.

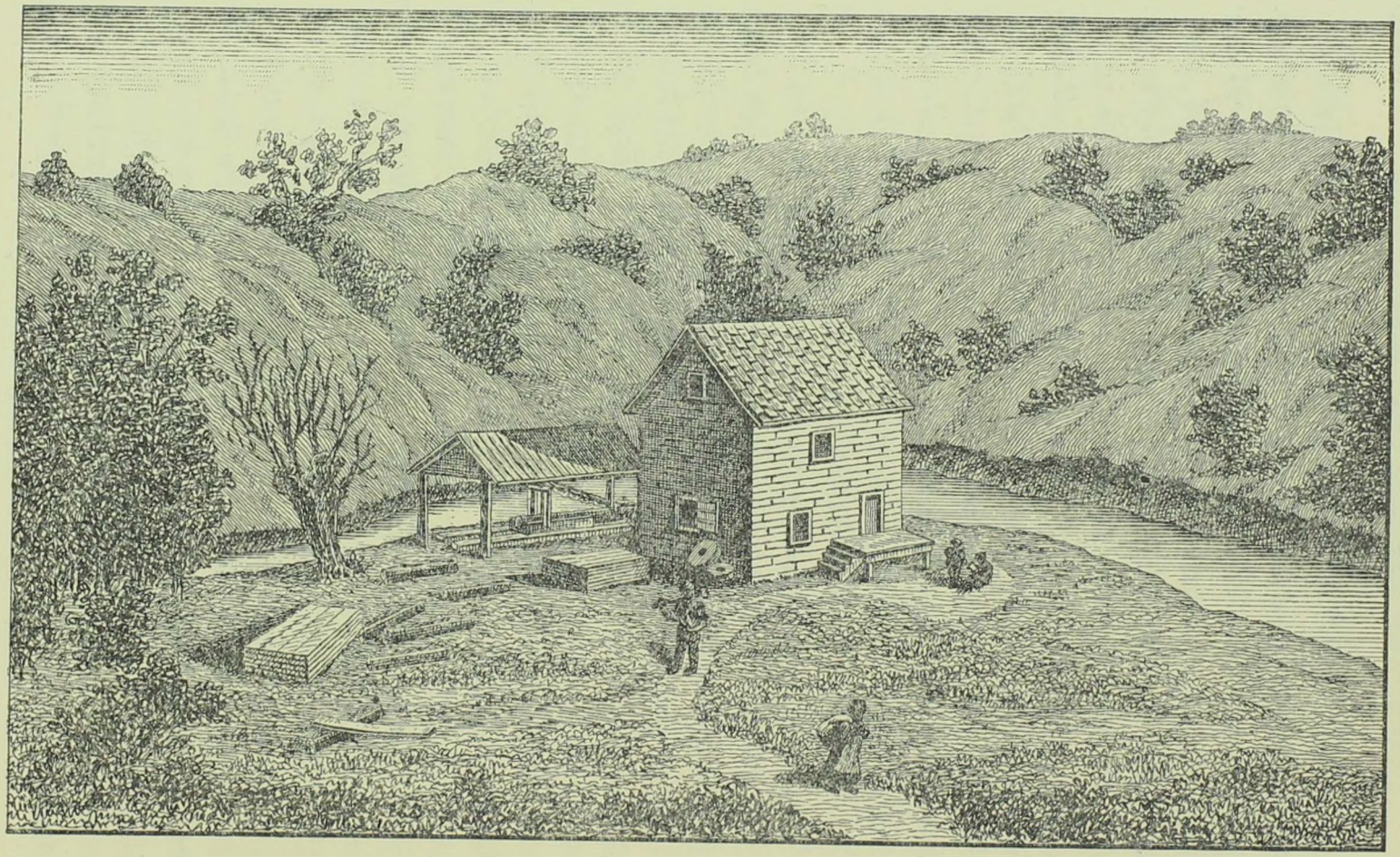
Little is known of the history of Bigfoot. He emigrated with his band from their eastern to their western home, across the country, without military supervision, and demonstrated that he was the best executive of all the chiefs. He located his village some fifty miles east of the blockhouse, on Indian Creek near its confluence with the East Nishnabotna, about where the town of Iranistan is now located. This band comprised about one-third of all the Indians removed to Iowa, and seems to have been more nearly self-supporting than any of the others, giving the Indian agents very little trouble.

Wabaunsee's village was located some ten miles southwest of the site of the city of Glenwood on a stream known as Wabaunsee Creek. It is said that he died there about 1847, his remains being placed in a tree near his home.

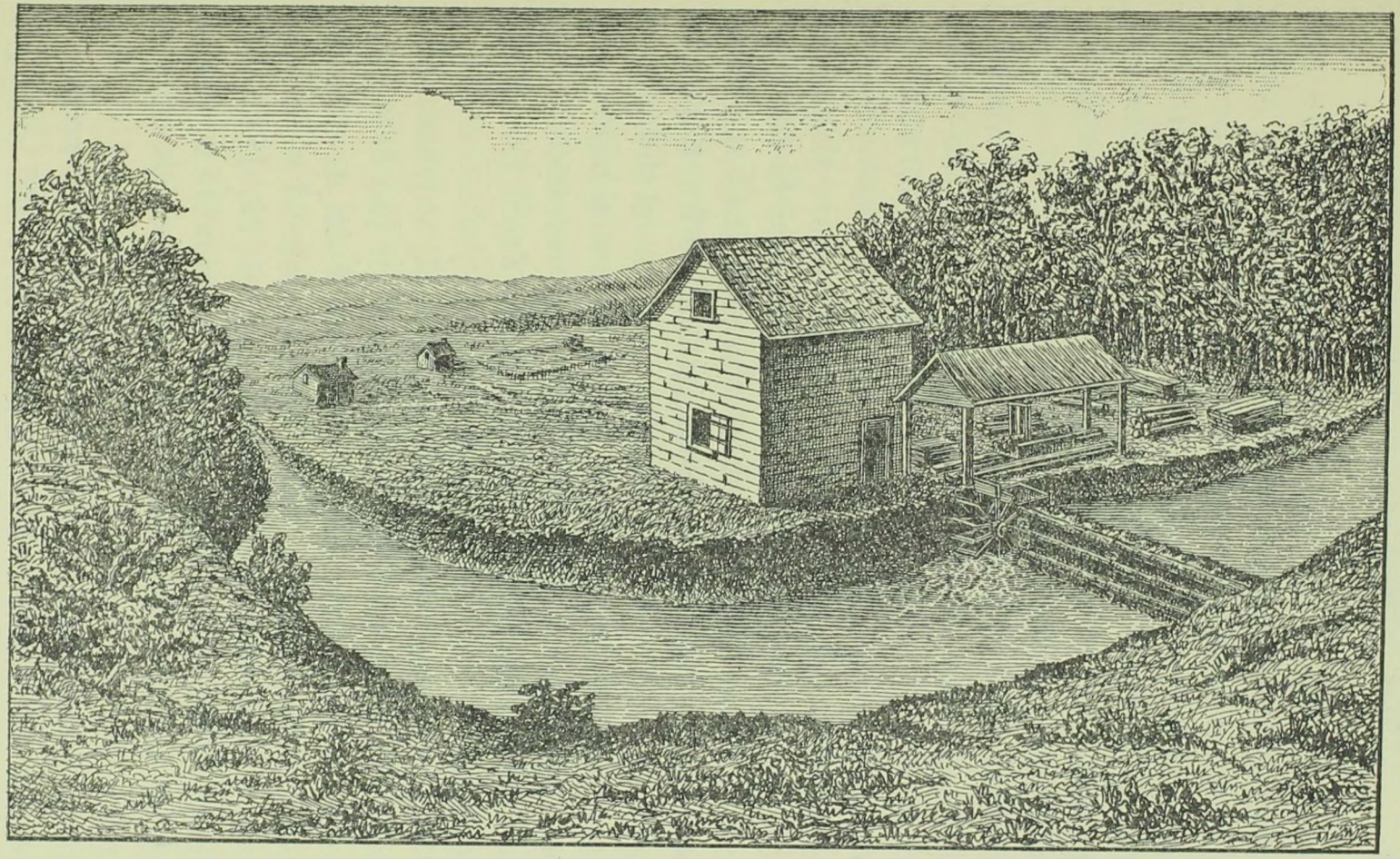
By the terms of the treaty of 1833 a fund of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was set apart for the erection of mills, farm houses, and blacksmith shops and for the support of such millers, physicians, and blacksmiths as the President of the United States might appoint for the benefit and accommodation of the Indians. The tribesmen who settled in southwestern Iowa were particularly interested in the construction of a mill to grind their grain and saw lumber. Federal officials deferred the erection of the mill, however, notwithstanding urgent appeals for its completion. Finally the chiefs became impatient and took the matter into their own hands.

In 1840 Caldwell and Laframboise, upon their own responsibility, entered into a contract with Samuel N. Holcomb for the construction of a mill on Mosquito Creek, about three miles northeast of the blockhouse, for the sum of three thousand dollars, pledging their personal credit and annuities in payment. By the terms of this contract one-half of the construction price was to be paid on completion of the mill and the remainder within six months thereafter, it being provided that the contractor should retain possession of and operate the property on a toll basis until full payment should be made.

The mill, fully equipped, was ready for use in the early part of 1841. A dam extending across the creek from north to south was in the neighborhood of forty feet long and from eight to nine feet high. It was constructed of timber-built cribs filled with earth, having an apron below to prevent washout from the backflow of water and a spillway at the south end. The sawing department consisted of a shed of hewn timber roofed and partly enclosed, about thirty or thirty-five feet long and twenty feet wide, fitted with an upright (or stirrup) saw and automatic feed carriage. The gristmill was a two-story frame building, well finished and weather-boarded. It was furnished with a single pair of granite grinding stones, about thirty inches in diameter, and cloth bolt capable of removing the bran from corn but not suitable for the manufacture of fine flour. The power was furnished by the action of



THE OLD POTTAWATTAMIE MILL — A VIEW FROM THE NORTHEAST NEAR THE INDIAN BLACKSMITH SHOP SHOWING THE BLUFFS ACROSS MOSQUITO CREEK



THE OLD POTTAWATTAMIE MILL — A VIEW FROM THE SOUTHWEST SHOWING THE MILLER'S DWELLING AND THE INDIAN BLACKSMITH SHOP IN THE BACKGROUND

the water upon an undershot wheel, probably ten feet in diameter and eight feet across the face of the buckets or paddles, supplied by a sluice box or gate head located at the north end of the dam. It was only at exceptional times, when the waterflow was unusual, that both the saw and grist departments could be operated simultaneously.

While the mill was in course of construction Caldwell and Laframboise canvassed the other chiefs with a view to securing their coöperation in paying the contractor. They were unsuccessful, however, it being contended by the others that they all should have been consulted in regard to the contract for the construction of the mill, that the location chosen was not the best attainable for the good and convenience of the greater number of the tribesmen, and that the cost of construction should have been borne by the United States government, payable from the general fund, and not from the tribal annuities.

Thus the matter stood in June, 1841, at which time Caldwell, without having arranged for the first payment to Holcomb, absented himself on a summer hunting excursion from which he returned sick. The final payment came due on August 22, 1841, but Caldwell was then seriously ill and unable to transact business. He died on September 27th of that year.

The questions regarding acceptance and payment for the mill were eventually referred to the Commis-

sioner of Indian Affairs, at Washington, who overruled the objections of Bigfoot and Wabaunsee, approved the Caldwell-Laframboise contract with Holcomb, and authorized acceptance and payment from the general fund by the Indian agent. Accordingly, on March 28, 1843, the Indian agent accepted the mill and made payment therefor to W. H. Parks, Holcomb's miller and agent, and the title passed to the United States in trust for the Pottawattamies. On the same date Reuben Hildreth was appointed as the first official miller in charge of the premises. He resigned on March 31, 1845, and William Russell was appointed to the position.

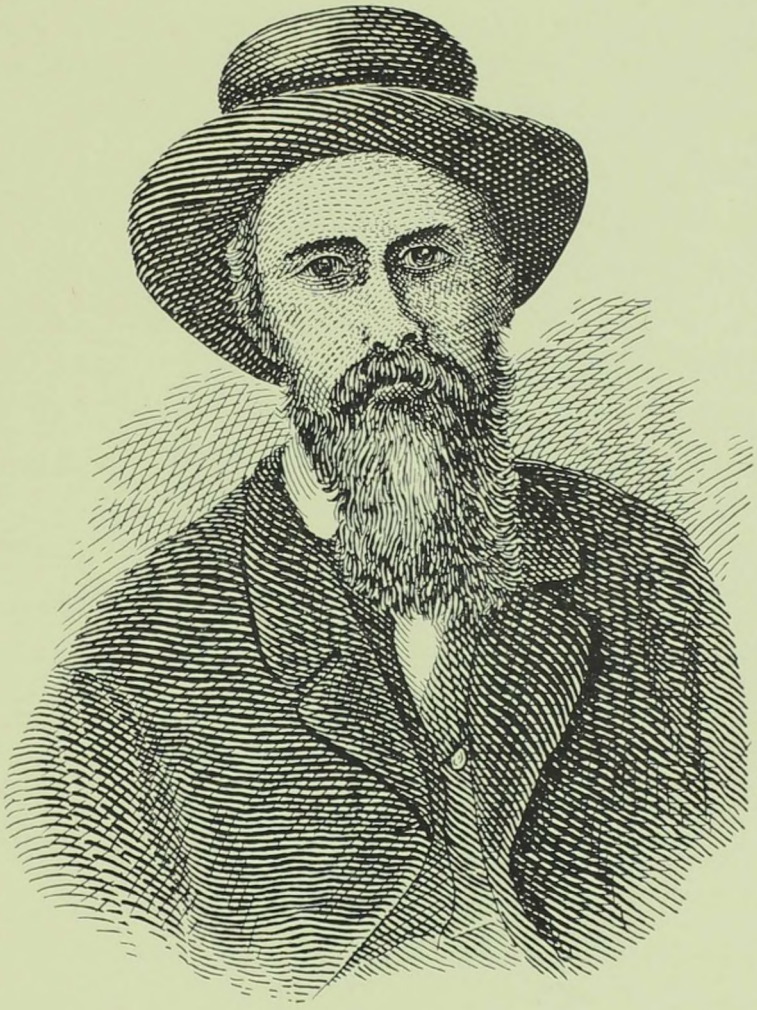
The miller was required to operate the mill free of charge to the Indians for whose benefit it had been built, though authorized and instructed to grind grain and saw logs for any other parties who might apply, just compensation being demanded for such service. The milling business was probably very light at the beginning, inasmuch as the Indian agent reported that the Pottawattamies who resided in the near vicinity "planted very little corn or anything else except here and there one who happened to have a plough." The need for lumber must have been limited because the Indians had completed their houses before the erection of the mill, and although several trading houses had been established in the vicinity soon after the coming of the Pottawattamies, the lumber needs of the traders, if any, were insignificant, while their breadstuffs were undoubtedly

shipped to them from points farther down the Missouri River.

Late in 1845 a self-appointed delegation of the Pottawattamies, without asking permission from the Indian Office, visited Washington with a view to surrendering their Iowa lands and removing to Kansas where the main body of their tribe had been located some years previously. Councils were held during the months of November and December between this delegation, assisted by their attorney, and the officials of the government, resulting in an agreement that a treaty should be afterward entered into whereby the Indians, for a cash consideration and a tract of land in Kansas thirty miles square, should release the Iowa lands and move to Kansas within two years from the ratification of the treaty. On June 5, 1846, a treaty in accord with that agreement was signed by nearly all of the Pottawattamie chiefs at the Council Bluffs Sub-agency.

The ceremonies connected with the signing of this treaty were probably conducted at the log barracks of Fort Croghan, constructed by Captain John H. K. Burgwin in 1842. Commemorative of these proceedings the place was thereafter known as Council Point, Fort Croghan having been abandoned in 1843. The site is within the corporate limits of the city of Council Bluffs, but the barracks disappeared long ago and now nothing remains to mark the spot they occupied.

In September, 1847, the Pottawattamies began



STUTELY E. WICKS

leaving the Council Bluffs country for their new Kansas home, and it became apparent that the exodus would be completed within the period prescribed by the treaty of 1846, rendering government operation of the old Pottawattamie mill unnecessary for their benefit. Meanwhile, William Stafford, who succeeded Russell as miller in 1846, surrendered the position on March 1, 1847, when Ambrose E. Owen became the last regularly appointed miller at the Council Bluffs Sub-agency of the Pottawattamie Indians.

There came with the Indians as a member of Caldwell's band, a white man named Stutely E. Wicks, known in frontier parlance as a "squaw man" because of his marriage to an Indian woman. He was born of pure New England parentage at Watertown, New York, in 1810 or 1811. At an early age he went to the vicinity of Chicago and there joined the Prairie Band of Pottawattamie Indians. On October 25, 1835, he married Catherine Muller, a mixed blood, and became a full member of the tribe with which he migrated to southwestern Iowa in 1837.

Wicks was an expert miller and tradition says he was employed at the mill from the very beginning of its operation by each successive officially designated miller, and that he in conjunction with his father-in-law, a professional wheelwright, ran the mill up to the appointment of Owen. Immediately upon assuming control, Owen discharged Wicks and unsuc-

cessfully sought possession of the miller's dwelling, occupied by the latter. Possession was denied him by Wicks, who contended in a manner convincing to the Indian sub-agent that he had built the house with his own money and that it was his personal property.

Early in 1848 Wicks proceeded to St. Louis and obtained an order from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs directing the sub-agent to lease the property to him as soon as the Indians had no further use for it. Accordingly Owen was ousted from the position of miller and Wicks entered into full possession and control about October 1st and began operating the mill as a private enterprise.

The departure of the Indians, the settlement of several thousand Mormons near Caldwell's village at Miller's Hollow (afterward called Kanesville and in 1853 officially named Council Bluffs by legislative enactment), and the opening of the lands to settlement under the public land laws gave an impetus to the milling business and Wicks appeared to be having much success in his venture. He was an improvident man, however. It was alleged that he was in arrears in the payment of rentals, and efforts to dislodge him were begun.

In October, 1849, a Mormon named Jesse Lowder secured a lease of the mill from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and demanded the surrender of the property by Wicks who demurred, saying that he had expended in repairs and replacement of machinery a sum in excess of his alleged indebtedness

for lease money and that practically all of the machinery then in the mill had been purchased by him with his own money. He therefore refused to give up the property, demanding reimbursement in the sum of five hundred dollars and additional payment for the miller's residence. Lowder refused to advance the necessary amount and the government officials were without authority to do so. No resort to the courts was made by either party and Wicks remained in possession.

After a year or so, Lowder, despairing of securing possession of the mill, filed a claim for five hundred dollars damages with the sub-agent for failure of the government to put him in possession of the premises, and while the claim took its regular slow course through official channels he departed for Salt Lake in 1852 with Orson Hyde's Mormon train. His claim was finally rejected by the Indian office, leaving Wicks in possession, and it does not appear that he was afterward required to pay rent.

The United States public land surveys were extended over the former Pottawattamie territory in 1851. A land office was established at Kanesville in 1852, but was not opened for business until March, 1853, at which time the tract upon which the mill was situated became subject to preëmption entry, or disposal at public sale after due proclamation.

By reason of his tribal relations with the Pottawattamie Indians, Wicks was not qualified to make preëmption entry, and he did not wish to sever his

Indian connections. It also appears that he did not wish to enter into competition with other bidders for the purchase of the land when it should come into market for sale, so he arranged with a young man in his employ, who was residing upon the land, to enter the same as a preëmptor, probably with an understanding that it should be transferred to Wicks whenever such action might be safely taken. Accordingly, after due preliminary filing and proof, George Schofield made cash entry for the tract embracing the mill and miller's dwelling, together with a blacksmith shop and the tools therein (removed from Fort Croghan in 1843, when the barracks were inundated by the Missouri River), and on June 18, 1853, (about two weeks after the purchase) Schofield conveyed the premises to Wicks.

Ordinarily, and in strict accordance with law, this tract of land and the improvements thereon should have been appraised and withheld from entry or sale of any kind to be later disposed of in such manner as the government might adopt; or the appraised value of the land occupied by improvements including the value of the latter should have been required of the preëmptor or other purchaser. In this instance, however, there appears to have been some oversight and the preëmption entry of Schofield was approved for patenting by the General Land Office on November 7, 1853. Upon the request of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated November 14, 1853, Schofield's entry was suspended for investigation. After a long

delay, the matter was finally cleared up on September 1, 1866, when a patent was issued to Schofield, thus validating the title of Wicks to the land and all of the improvements.

So the old Pottawattamie mill at Council Bluffs passed from the control of the United States and thereafter became in fact "Wicks's Mill", as it had been known since the departure of the Indians. Wicks operated the old mill continuously until early in April, 1862, when it was seriously damaged by flood. After a period of twenty-one years of faithful service the old Pottawattamie mill at Council Bluffs fell a victim to the element from which it drew its life and power. For some time prior to this disaster Wicks had been doing very little business and had mortgaged the property for all it would carry, and so was not in a position either to repair the flood damage or attempt to rebuild the structures. Shortly afterward — the same year or the next — he went to the mining regions of Montana and Idaho, hoping to rebuild his fortune. In this he was unsuccessful. He became sick and started to return to his home, but he died of pneumonia on the way late in 1865, and was buried by his companions in the mountains, not far from the site of the Custer battlefield.

Upon the departure of Wicks for the West his mortgagee took possession of the mill property and erected a new mill on the site of the old one, but the venture proved unprofitable and, after passing through several transfers, the place became known

as Parks's mill, and continued under that name until the buildings were destroyed by fire in the early seventies. The actual spot upon which the old mill stood has become so obscured by urban improvements and artificial changes in the channel of Mosquito Creek as to render its precise identification difficult, if not impossible, at the present time.

CHARLES H. BABBITT

Comment by the Editor

SYMBOLISM AND THE CALUMET

Among all people symbolism is the bridge from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown. Based upon the amazing uniformities in nature, the use of one thing to explain another possessing some common characteristic is the universal method of interpreting human experience. Language is entirely a system of symbols. The trademark of the Wills-St. Claire Motor Company was designed to carry the irresistible implication that the car has the speed, silence, grace, and endurance of the flying geese it emulates. A flag represents in a tangible way the complex condition of nationality. By virtue of a deeper meaning attached to words or objects they become dynamic. The power of any symbol depends, therefore, upon the knowledge of its history.

As the cross is the sign of Christianity, so the calumet is symbolical of Indian religion. Originally a calumet consisted of a shaft of wood from eighteen inches to four feet long, perforated for the spirit or breath to pass through, and adorned in honor of various gods whose aid it was used to invoke. Feathers from the wings of an eagle signified that the supplications might soar to the abode of the

principal deity. The head of an owl was attached that the spirit of destiny might not be troubled at night, while a duck's head performed a similar function on the water. A serpent carved on the shaft was an indication of enmity and was never found upon the calumets of peace. When convenience united the sacrificial tobacco pipe to the highly symbolic calumet stem, the combined instrument became the most sacred object known to the Indians. It represented a veritable council of the gods, and the elaborate ceremonies in which it figured were thought to be essential to every important function in life.

The calumet was employed by travellers as a passport, it was used for social and political purposes, to secure favorable weather, and to ratify agreements which could not be violated without inevitable punishment by the gods. When the first white men visited the Indians in Iowa they smoked the pipe of peace, and the calumet which Marquette carried away as a token of friendship saved the lives of the venturesome Frenchmen more than once on their famous voyage down the Father of Waters. Rarely indeed have the red men broken the word they have plighted in the name of the calumet. Small wonder that white men in formal intercourse with the Indians have willingly engaged in their ceremonies, adopted their beautifully figurative language, and smoked their calumets of peace.

J. E. B.

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