

The Second Purchase

During the summer of 1837 some Fox Indians were ascending the highlands between the Cedar and Wapsipinicon rivers in quest of game. Led by the great war chief Waucohaushe, the half-starved Foxes discovered a band of Winnebago hunting on Fox territory and consequently moved over to the Wapsipinicon at the mouth of Otter Creek (Otterville) in present-day Buchanan County. There they encountered a large Sioux hunting party also trespassing on Fox territory. Although greatly outnumbered the Foxes attacked the Sioux in sheer desperation. Nine Foxes were killed and eleven wounded before Waucohaushe signalled a retreat.

On August 8, 1837, two Fox messengers brought news of the bloody affray to Colonel George Davenport at his "Indian Lodge" on Rock Island. Waucohaushe, himself mortally wounded, urged Davenport to report the episode to Indian Agent Joseph Street. Two days later Davenport notified Street.

On August 19, 1837, the *Northwestern Gazette and Galena Advertiser* published a letter from Davenport explaining the sad plight of the In-

dians, together with Waucochaushe's description of the fight. In less than a fortnight newspapers from Saint Louis to Washington were acquainted with the grim facts. The *Missouri Republican* branded the government's failure to enforce its treaties as a "most glaring" injustice to the Indians. Moreover, settlers in the Black Hawk Purchase were already clamoring for more land.

The Sauks and Foxes of the upper Mississippi Valley were invited to send their principal chiefs to visit the Great White Father in Washington. The Ioways, the Winnebago, and the Sioux also agreed to attend the meeting. It was expected that the united delegations, consisting of about one hundred and fifty, would "form an interesting spectacle, and attract a vast concourse" to the negotiations.

Meanwhile, Governor Henry Dodge of the Territory of Wisconsin was negotiating with the Chippewa at Fort Snelling. On July 29, 1837, these fierce warriors agreed to give up all claim to land in the Saint Croix Valley, thereby releasing vast acres of timber destined to feed the sawmills of future Iowa and provide homes for her citizens. Prominent among the signers of this treaty were Henry Dodge, Verplank Van Antwerp, H. H. Sibley, H. L. Dousman, E. Lockwood, J. N. Nicollet, W. W. Coriell, Indian Agent Lawrence

Taliaferro, and John Emerson, United States army surgeon and owner of Dred Scott.

At the conclusion of the Chippewa treaty, Taliaferro boarded a steamboat with twenty-six Sioux and set out down the Mississippi. The delegation reached Washington in mid-September, the first of the red men to arrive at the capital to arrange for the "future security of the northwestern frontier".

A Galena editor described the Sioux as a curious set of "varmints", but a Washington correspondent considered them as "some of the best specimens" of the northwestern Indians. "Their forms are of the most noble mould, and the grace and majesty of their movements, despite the gaudy and grotesque trappings which encumber them, are subjects of general remark. Several are more than six feet high, straight as an arrow, with thews and sinews that seem to set fatigue at defiance, but with hands and feet of the most royal proportions." The Washington reporter was particularly interested in watching the warriors paint their faces. "The 'ground color,' to speak in painter's phrase, is a bright vermilion: on this they daub spots of white and green. Some dandies, however, draw a circle of white or black around one eye, which gives a very ferocious expression to that orb."

The Secretary of War, Joel R. Poinsett, entered immediately into a two-day "talk" with the stoical Sioux. The meetings were held in Dr. Laurie's church and were of such "curious interest" as to attract "vast crowds". On September 29, 1837, the Sioux ceded all their rights to land east of the Mississippi.

By this time the remaining delegations had arrived in Washington. Joshua Pilcher brought his Ioway Indians and the Sauks and Foxes from the Missouri. Thomas A. B. Boyd was present with his Winnebago charges. From the land of Black Hawk came Joseph Street with his Sauk and Fox warriors. The delegations traveled by steamboat as far as Wheeling whence they proceeded overland to Washington.

Of all the mighty warriors none attracted more attention than Keokuk and Black Hawk. Keokuk spoke in many towns along the way and everywhere his dignity of bearing and his eloquence won him warm applause. He was compared favorably with Webster and Calhoun. Black Hawk was induced to accompany the delegation to avoid the possibility of another outbreak on the frontier. Appanoose and Kishkekosh were other Sauk chiefs, and Wapello and Poweshiek ranked highest among the Foxes.

The government provided special entertainment

to make the Indians amenable to suggestion. Soon after their arrival the Sauks and Foxes attended the theater on the night of Miss Nelson's benefit. "Delighted with the novelty and splendor of the scene, and the beauty and costume of the fair beneficiary, who was enacting Perseus, one of the chiefs threw his war cap, ornamented with feathers of the eagle, to her, as an offering, as the interpreter said, to the 'Beauty of Washington!' " Miss Nelson "gracefully and gratefully" accepted this gift. Then another chief "threw his cap" to her. In return for these favors she presented the chiefs with "several ostrich feathers from her helmet." Two buffalo robes were then presented to the actress.

On the eve of the departure of Major Taliaferro and his Sioux, the Secretary of War hopefully but "very unwisely" brought the warring factions together in Dr. Laurie's church. The obvious result was "a war of recrimination and sarcasm".

The Sioux placed all the blame for the incessant warfare in the Neutral Ground upon the Sauks and Foxes. They claimed to have been struck many times by their mortal enemies without striking back. "My ears are always open to good counsel," Mampuweechastah declared, "but I think my great father should take a stick and bore

the ears of these people. They appear to shut their ears when they come here into the council."

The Sauks and Foxes remained seated for some moments after the bitter Sioux tirade. Finally Keokuk arose and strode majestically before the commissioners. He was followed by Wapello, Appanoose, and Poweshiek. At the same moment that Keokuk shook hands with the commissioners, the other chiefs and braves of the confederated tribes rose solemnly. They continued standing throughout Keokuk's oration.

With biting sarcasm, Keokuk upbraided the Sioux, charging them with flagrant violations of sacred treaties. "These people", he thundered dramatically, "say we are deaf to your advice, and advise you to bore our ears with sticks. I think their ears are so closed against the hearing of all good, that it will be necessary to bore them with iron." Showing the remarkable understanding which characterized his leadership, he continued. "If among the whites, a man purchased a piece of land, another came upon it, you would drive him off. Let the Sioux keep from our lands, and there will be peace."

Wapello then stepped forward. "You have heard our chief speak. In him consists the strength of our nation. We are his arms, his heart, his soul." Scornfully addressing the Sioux, Pow-

eshiek roared, "When I killed a Sioux, I revenged myself on my own land, not on theirs. These men are like I was when a little boy; there is a great deal of mischief in their heads." Appanoose scoffed at the Sioux tales of Sauk depredations, each of which had been registered by placing a stick on the council table. "I suppose every time we drove them off our land they cut a stick; that will account for that bundle of sticks on the table."

After listening patiently to these implacable enemies villify each other, the Secretary of War arose and pointed out that he had not brought them together to "judge which had attacked the other first, or to determine which was in the wrong." He explained that the forty-mile strip of land known as the Neutral Ground was erected to keep the two tribes apart and whoever crossed it did wrong. "I exhort you again, on returning home," he concluded, "to throw away the war-club and bury the tomahawk, and I trust that I shall hear that the two great tribes now represented before me have smoked the pipe together, and promised to remain at peace with each other."

After the Sioux departed, the government entered into final negotiations with the Sauks and Foxes for a tract of land west of the Black Hawk Purchase. On October 21, 1837, the confederated

tribes agreed to cede 1,250,000 acres. The western boundary of this tract was to be determined by surveying straight lines from the northwest and southwest corners of the Black Hawk Purchase to a point "about twenty-five miles" west of the angle in the western boundary of the Black Hawk Purchase.

The Second Purchase included most of present-day Linn, Johnson, and Washington counties, much of Buchanan, Benton, Iowa, Keokuk, Jefferson, and Van Buren counties and corners of Fayette, Cedar, and Davis counties. Within this area are Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Marion, Independence, Fairfield, and most of the Amana colonies. The cession furnished homes for nearly eight thousand more pioneer families with the regulation quarter section each, and remained the western limit of settlement for nearly five years.

In return for this generous slice of territory the government paid \$377,000, or a little over thirty cents per acre. Of this sum \$200,000 was to be held in trust, the government guaranteeing to pay not less than five per cent annually "in the manner annuities are paid, at such time and place, and in money or goods as the tribe may direct." The remainder of the money not required for debts or presents was to be expended to secure laborers to help in agricultural pursuits, break up and fence

the land still in possession of the Indians, erect two grist mills, and purchase a large amount of goods desired by the Sauks and Foxes.

The Second Purchase was negotiated by Carey A. Harris, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and signed in the presence of Chauncey Bush, secretary, Indian agents Joseph M. Street and Joshua Pilcher, Interpreter Antoine Le Claire, George Davenport, J. F. A. Sanford, S. C. Stambaugh, and P. G. Hambaugh. Twenty-three Indians, including Keokuk, Appanoose, Wapello, and Poweshiek, made their marks on the treaty. Black Hawk was not allowed to sign. The Missouri Sauks and Foxes agreed to another treaty surrendering all claim to land in central Iowa.

At the conclusion of these ceremonies the Secretary of War expressed pleasure that the Indians had made "liberal provisions for the support of schools" and hope that the red men would treat their teachers "with respect and kindness." Poinsett was also delighted with the provisions for receiving instruction in the "art of cultivating the soil." Finally, he urged all his listeners to return home and "live at peace with each other, and with the surrounding tribes."

Before returning to Iowaland the Sauks and Foxes visited several eastern cities. At Boston a holiday was declared. The Indians performed the

war dance on Boston Common, and were welcomed at the State House by Governor Edward Everett. The Governor spoke highly of his red brethren and Keokuk hoped the Great Spirit would "long keep friendship between the white and red man." Poweshiek had often heard his grandfather tell of the sea coast where his ancestors first greeted the white man. "I wish I had a book, and could read in it all these things", he lamented wistfully. "I have been told that that is the way you get all your knowledge."

Black Hawk felt sure the Great Spirit was pleased that the Indian and his white brother were talking together with friendship and understanding. "I have lived for a long time between the Mississippi and Missouri," he told Governor Everett. "I like to hear you talk of them." At the conclusion of the speeches Governor Everett presented each warrior with a sword, a brace of pistols, and a blanket. To the women, he gave bright shawls and trinkets. With these tokens of friendship and the memory of pleasant experiences the Indians returned to their wickiups beyond the frontier.

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