

## The Terms of Peace

A paroxysm of fear gripped the Upper Mississippi Valley. Rumors of a general Indian uprising spread like wild fire. Stillman's ignominious defeat, the constantly recurring stories of Indian atrocities, together with the brilliant strategy exhibited by Black Hawk in his retreat up the Rock River, left the entire frontier in a turmoil. News despatches contained accounts of further reverses which served only to heighten the general alarm.

Impatient at the failure of Brigadier General Henry Atkinson to crush Black Hawk, President Andrew Jackson ordered Major General Winfield Scott to "proceed to the seat of war and put an end to it." While crossing the Great Lakes from Buffalo to Chicago, cholera broke out among Scott's troops. The only surgeon aboard the commander's steamboat became panic-stricken and, according to Scott, "gulped down half a bottle of wine; went to bed, sick, and ought to have died." Undaunted by the horrors of death, Scott ministered to the suffering soldiers whose "brows he smoothed as they died in agony, trying with a last gasp to bless him" for his tender care.

"Sentinels were of no use in warning of the enemy's approach", Scott related afterwards. "He could not storm his works, fortify against him, nor cut his way out, nor make terms of capitulation. There was no respect for a flag of truce and his men were falling upon all sides from an enemy in his very midst." His losses from cholera were greater than the casualties suffered by the regulars and militia throughout the Black Hawk War.

General Scott reached Prairie du Chien shortly after the massacre at Bad Axe. Having mustered out the volunteer militia, he proceeded down the Mississippi on the steamboat *Warrior* to Fort Armstrong where the Indians were gathering to make a treaty. Cholera broke out on Rock Island about August 26th, and drastic measures were posted demanding "sobriety, cleanliness of person, cleanliness of camp and quarters, together with care in the preparation of the men's messes". Swift punishment was meted out to the intemperate — "every soldier or Ranger who shall be found drunk or sensibly intoxicated after the publication of this order, [shall] be compelled, as soon as his strength will permit, to dig a grave at a suitable burying place large enough for his own reception, as such grave cannot fail soon to be wanted for the drunken man himself or some drunken companion."

This order was given, the commandant explained, "as well to serve for the punishment of drunkenness as to spare good and temperate men the labor of digging graves for their worthless companions."

Meanwhile so many Indians became affected with the plague that Scott directed them not to assemble at Rock Island until they received a new summons. With unusual faith in the red men, "not yet taught by his white brethren to lie, to cheat and steal", Scott permitted three Sauk prisoners, guilty of murder, to leave Fort Armstrong on their promise to return when a signal was displayed on a dead tree at an elevated point of the island. "The cholera having passed away," the intrepid commander relates, "the signal was given, when, in a day or two, the three *murderers* presented themselves!" Scott's appeal for their parole was granted and the Indians were set free.

When the cholera had subsided on Rock Island, preparations were made for the holding of the treaty. A motley array of tribesmen soon assembled — Sioux, Menominee, and Winnebago, intermingled with the confederated tribes of Sauk and Fox. Often warring against one another, these savage Indians were for the time being restrained by the "presence of well-disciplined battalions — mingling together in the wild and mar-

tial costume of their race." Governor John Reynolds of Illinois was selected by the government to serve with Scott as a commissioner in the negotiations. Captain Richard Bache acted as secretary.

After some preliminary conferences with the Sioux and Menominee, the commissioners turned their attention to the Winnebago. Since the "wearer of the sword" was the "effective orator" before the Indians, General Scott conducted the discussions. The Winnebago were informed that for their "secret encouragement and preparations to join in highly criminal hostilities" they must forfeit all land they claimed "lying to the south and east of the Wisconsin river, and the Fox river of Green Bay", which included southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. In return they were to be granted a new home in the Neutral Ground in Iowa, ten thousand dollars in specie and sundry annuities for a period of twenty-seven years, and a school and blacksmith shop. Such a treaty was signed at Fort Armstrong on September 15, 1832.

On the following day, General Scott hastily forwarded the Winnebago treaty on a steamboat which had unexpectedly arrived, bound for St. Louis. "We trust it will be satisfactory to the government", he concluded. "The cholera having

entirely disappeared from this Island and the immediate vicinity", he expected to enter upon "important conferences and negotiations with the Sacs and Foxes to-morrow."

A delicate situation existed which required the highest degree of diplomacy and statesmanship. "We await with anxiety," declared the *Galenian* of September 19, 1832, "the result of the Treaty with the Sacs and Foxes. We have the utmost confidence in our commissioners — but the very critical situation in which they are placed (requiring the *majority* to cede a part of their territory for the acts of the *minority*) may prevent their obtaining all that we could desire. We are satisfied however, that equal justice will be meted out to both parties."

The entire confederation of Sauks and Foxes — braves, squaws, and papooses — had gathered on the west bank of the Mississippi. Since the consent of the entire nation was necessary in any cession of land, a large open tent or "marquee" was erected on the present site of Davenport in which to hold the preliminary negotiations.

Resplendent in his heavily brocaded uniform and plumed hat, Major General Scott stood tall and erect before the Indians while Governor John Reynolds sat close beside him. The uniformed ranks of the regulars standing in martial array

with light trousers, blue coats, and jaunty feathered cockades, were in sharp contrast to the dusky Indians squatting in every conceivable posture in their bright blankets and feathered headdresses. Richard Bache, acting as Secretary to the Commissioners, was busily engaged in taking notes of the speeches of the Commissioners while Antoine Le Claire translated the speeches of the Indians. It was a shifting scene of color and confusion in which the attire and demeanor of natives and soldiers represented the nature of the conflict between the two races — the one free, unorderly, primitive; the other restrained, disciplined, civilized.

Although governed by a spirit of forbearance and liberality, Scott opened each council with "stern reproach — reminding the confederate tribes that, by their failure to restrain one of their chiefs, Black Hawk, from making an unjust war upon the unoffending white settlers, near them, the whole confederacy had forfeited as much of their territory as the conquerors might choose to claim as an indemnity". These denunciations having been made clear by Antoine Le Claire, the interpreter, and their justice shown to be indisputable, Scott proceeded: "Such is justice, between nation and nation, against which none can rightfully complain; but as God in his dealings

with human creatures tempers justice with mercy — or else the whole race of man would soon have perished — so shall we, commissioners, in humble imitation of divine example, now treat you, my red brethren! who have offended both against God and your great human father, at Washington.” He concluded by demanding from the Sauk and Fox Indians a strip of land west of the Mississippi.

Grateful replies were returned in each council, that of Keokuk being full of “sound sentiment, power, and pathos.” Keokuk appeared to be in the “prime of life, tall, robust, manly”. The eloquent orator so impressed General Scott that he “solemnly invested [him] with the rank and broad silver medal of a chief, with the consent of the tribe, and on an equal footing with the proudest who had inherited the title through long generations.” Not until his death did Keokuk relinquish this chieftaincy of which he was justly proud.

When the Sauk and Fox chiefs and warriors approached headquarters for formal conferences, it was “always with the loud tramp and shout, which seemed to be rather the clangor of war than the forms of ceremony. 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. Arrayed in scarlet hues, their national color, sometimes on foot and sometimes mounted, nothing could be more striking than the fine figures, arms, and costumes" of these brilliant warriors.

Favorite Indian songs and dances were interspersed between the long and often exceedingly dull speeches. The war dance, the buffalo dance, and the corn dance frequently enlivened the afternoon activities before headquarters as the young men exhibited the "achievements, events, and history of the individual or the tribe" in descriptive pantomime. Sometimes these dances were followed by cotillions, reels, and quadrilles in which the young army officers danced with the braves who, according to Scott, proved themselves exceedingly "quick in step and imitation, as well as in loud laughter, at every turn. A band furnished the music and heightened the joy of all."

When the entire confederation of Sauks and Foxes had given their assent to the provisions of the treaty as explained by Antoine Le Claire, the chiefs, headmen, and warriors crossed the Mississippi with Keokuk and signed their marks to the articles of the treaty of peace, friendship and cession, which was "concluded at Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Illinois", between the United States



of America and the confederated tribes of Sauks and Foxes. It consisted of a preamble and twelve articles and was dated September 21, 1832.

The treaty opened with a stern rebuke: "Whereas, under certain lawless and desperate leaders, a formidable band, constituting a large portion of the Sac and Fox nation, left their country in April last, and, in violation of treaties, commenced an unprovoked war upon unsuspecting and defenceless citizens of the United States, sparing neither age nor sex; and whereas, the United States, at a great expense of treasure, have subdued the said hostile band, killing or capturing all its principal Chiefs and Warriors — the said States, partly as indemnity for the expense incurred, and partly to secure the future safety and tranquility of the invaded frontier, demand of the said tribes" the cession of a tract of land west of the Mississippi.

The first article bounded the cession. Beginning on the Mississippi at the southern boundary of the Neutral Ground, the line ran fifty miles up that boundary to a point near the present site of Westgate in Fayette County; thence, in a straight line running south east to the "nearest point on the Red Cedar of the Ioway, forty miles from the Mississippi" (near Cedar Bluff in Cedar County); thence, in a straight line to a point on the

northern boundary of the State of Missouri, fifty miles from the Mississippi River measured on said boundary (a point between the North and South Wyaconda rivers and directly south of Pulaski in Davis County); thence, along that boundary line to the Mississippi River (just below Fort Madison); and thence by the western shore of the Mississippi to the place of beginning. The Indians agreed to remove from this land by June 1, 1833, and never "reside, plant, fish, or hunt" on any portion of it again.

Included in this large tract is all of the present-day counties of Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson, Jones, Clinton, Scott, Muscatine, Louisa, Des Moines, Henry, and Lee; most of Clayton, Cedar, and Van Buren; and a portion of the counties of Allamakee, Fayette, Buchanan, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Jefferson, and Davis.

Out of the Black Hawk cession the United States agreed to reserve four hundred square miles along the "Ioway" River in such a manner that "nearly an equal portion of the reservation may be on both sides of said river, and extending downward, so as to include Ke-o-kuck's principal village on its right bank, which village is about twelve miles from the Mississippi". This tract is generally known as the Keokuk Reserve and included portions of Johnson, Muscatine, Louisa,

Washington, and Des Moines counties. Granted to Keokuk as a reward for his loyalty, this reservation was ceded to the United States four years later.

The third article provided for an annual annuity of \$20,000 in specie for thirty years. The government agreed in article four to establish and maintain "one additional black and gun smith shop, with the necessary tools, iron and steel" for three decades. A yearly allowance for the same period of time of "forty kegs of tobacco, and forty barrels of salt, to be delivered at the mouth of the Ioway river" was also granted.

At the earnest request of both tribes the United States next agreed to pay \$40,000 without interest to Russell Farnham and George Davenport in full satisfaction of the claims "acknowledged to be justly due, for articles of necessity" provided the Indians during the preceding seven years. Then followed a special request whereby the government was to grant Antoine Le Claire, Indian interpreter, one section of land on the present site of Davenport and another at the head of the rapids where Le Claire is now located.

Black Hawk and his band were the concern of the next two articles. Having already delivered most of the Indian prisoners of war to Keokuk, the United States promised to use its influence to

secure the delivery of those who were still prisoners of the Sioux. But Black Hawk himself and his two sons, together with the Prophet, Neapope, and six others were to be held as hostages for the future good conduct of the late hostile tribes. As a further guarantee of peace, it was next stipulated that there should "never be allowed in the confederated Sac and Fox nation, any separate band, or village, under any chief or warrior of the late hostile bands" but that these should be divided among the neutral bands according to blood relationship.

Article nine contained a declaration of perpetual peace and friendship between the contracting parties. As a token of good faith and a "striking evidence of their mercy and liberality", the United States caused to be issued immediately to the "confederated tribes, principally for the use of the Sac and Fox women and children, whose husbands, fathers and brothers, have been killed in the late war, and generally for the use of the whole confederated tribes, articles of subsistence as follows: — thirty-five beef cattle; twelve bushels of salt; thirty barrels of pork; and fifty barrels of flour, and cause to be delivered for the same purposes, in the month of April next, at the mouth of the lower Ioway, six thousand bushels of maize or Indian corn."

The last two articles were brief. Eleven provided that a "suitable present" should be made to the confederated tribes if they would point out to a United States agent one or more mines of metal more valuable than lead or iron. The concluding article provided that the treaty should be binding when ratified by the President of the United States.

Originally called the Scott Purchase but more generally known as the Black Hawk Purchase, the treaty was signed on September 21, 1832, by Winfield Scott and John Reynolds for the United States. Nine Sauks, including Keokuk and Pash-paho, and twenty-four Foxes of whom Wapello and Poweshiek were most prominent, signed the treaty for the Indians. Among the forty-four witnesses to sign the treaty were Major Henry Dodge, later Governor of the Territory of Wisconsin; George Davenport, influential trader at Rock Island; Addison Philleo, editor of the *Galenian*; and Antoine Le Claire.

A "contented and cheerful" note marked the closing scene of the Black Hawk War which for six months had held the country in suspense. Major General Scott gave a "grand dinner" for the principal chiefs on the evening following the signing of the treaty. Refreshments were "handed round nearly in the manner of our cities" while a

band blared martial music. To cap it all a "brilliant display of pyrotechnics" sent up a red light which "gleamed against the evening sky, shells and rockets burst in the air" as the soldiers discharged "fire balls from mortars" and fired batteries of rockets. Amid the echo of bursting fireworks reverberating among the distant bluffs, General Scott heard "much shouting of delight from the Indians encamped on the mainland — Rock Island being in the centre of an amphitheatre of high hills".

The colorful Keokuk contributed no small part to the entertainment by a pantomime of one of his successful expeditions against a hostile party. In General Scott's opinion it required no interpretation to note first "the tedious march; streams to swim; next the rapid run, and now the stealthy step — beckoning to his followers the discovery of the unsuspecting enemy at camp fires with rifles laid aside, waiting a moment longer for the cooked venison they were destined never to eat; — then the rush upon the unarmed, and the slaying. In a moment all was over, but the shouting." So successfully was this executed and so warmly was it applauded that this "accomplished hero in peace as in war" responded graciously with a war dance.

General Scott returned to his post in the East with the good wishes of all ringing in his ears.

In congratulating the Commissioners for their prompt method of treating with the Indians, the *Galenian* for October 10, 1832, observed that General Scott had talked to the Indians in such a way as to make a "deep impression on their minds. The Sacs and Foxes were glad to treat with us; and perfectly willing to sell their country." A week later, on October 17, 1832, the *Washington Globe* declared: "The Commissioners, who have concluded these arrangements, by which a valuable country is obtained, the peace and security of the frontiers secured, and a new field of enterprise opened to emigrants, are entitled to public approbation, not only for these results, but for having maintained the national character, and carried into effect the intentions of the President, in granting liberal terms to the Indians, and in having inspired them with confidence and good will, by treating them individually with great kindness."

The Indians, too, were impressed with the character and ability of General Scott, declaring him to be the "greatest brave" they had ever seen. "Our braves speak more highly of him than of any chief who has been among us", declared Black Hawk. "Whatever he says may be depended upon. If he had been our great father, we never would have been compelled to join the British in

the late war with America. And I have thought as our great father is changed every few years, his children would do well to put this great war-chief in his place, as they cannot find a better chief for a great father anywhere." Twenty years later the Whigs nominated Winfield Scott for the Presidency, but the Americans failed to heed Black Hawk's advice to elect him their "great father".

Nor was it merely the press and the Indians who offered such unstinted praise. The government at Washington was equally pleased. "Allow me to congratulate you, sir," wrote the Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, "upon this fortunate consummation of your arduous duties, and to express my entire approbation of the whole course of your proceedings, during a series of difficulties requiring higher moral courage than the operations of an active campaign, under ordinary circumstances."

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