

8-1-1957

Powwow Time

Dick Spencer III

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest>

Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Spencer III, Dick. "Powwow Time." *The Palimpsest* 38 (1957), 316-336.

Available at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest/vol38/iss8/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Palimpsest by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Powwow Time

Each year as the summer draws to a close, and the "leaf-falling" moon approaches, the throb of the tom-tom and the chant of the Indian echoes out over Iowaland. It is powwow time at Tama, and the red men convene in full regalia to perform tribal dances and ceremony for visitors.

August of 1957 will mark the 42nd annual powwow of the Meskwaki on their Sauk and Fox reservation near Tama, and the people of Iowa will be welcomed to one of the most colorful events in the state.

To the Indian, powwow time is far more than colorful pagentry and tribal dancing — it is their own aboriginal combination of homecoming, fiesta, Mardi Gras, convention, and social event. It is their chance to give visitors an insight into their native arts, ceremonies, dances, songs, games, costumes, music, and oratory. It is also their chance to relive days of a happy, bygone era — and to enjoy themselves immensely.

The present site of the powwow is on a plot of ground known to the Indians as the "Old Battleground." As you watch beaded, painted, roached, and feathered red men perform their tribal dances, perhaps your mind can drift back for more than a

century. On this spot in 1839, according to an Indian tradition, a roving band of Sioux warriors surprised the sleeping Meskwaki, after establishing their positions during the night with owl and wolf calls. The Sioux attacked at dawn, and the battle continued until mid-morning before they were put to flight. Fourteen Meskwaki were killed as a result of the onslaught, but they fought back bravely and brought down ten Sioux before routing the invaders.

When the Sioux retreated, one of their warriors was left behind, badly wounded in the knee. Jim Poweshiek's grandmother grabbed an axe, rushed at him, and killed the Sioux brave. For this deed she was awarded the skin of a skunk, which was the highest honor that could be given to a woman. She thus became the only Meskwaki woman permitted to join in the war dance in which only braves who had killed an enemy in combat could participate.

In 1950 Jim Poweshiek, the oldest living Meskwaki, died. It was through him that a plot of ground was set aside as a powwow grounds in 1937. This was done by an agreement between James Poweshiek and the Sauk and Fox tribes, the Sauk and Fox Powwow Committee, and the United States government. It provided:

1. That the Sac and Fox Pow Wow committee shall be permitted to hold its annual Pow Wow on the Pow Wow grounds provided that no games of chance or acts

of misconduct shall be sponsored or permitted by said Pow Wow committee; and provided further that any damage to or theft of Government or private property, resulting from said Pow Wow shall be repaired or replaced from the proceeds of said Pow Wow; and provided further that the Pow Wow committee shall remove all refuse from the premises at the end of each Pow Wow period.

2. That the Sac & Fox Athletic teams shall be permitted to play its games on the above-mentioned tract of land under the same conditions as those obtaining in Paragraph 1.

3. That the Government shall be permitted to place improvements on the Pow Wow grounds as it sees fit.

4. That the General Public shall be permitted to use the Pow Wow grounds for family or private picnics.

5. That James Poweshiek and/or his heirs, administrators, executors, and assigns, shall continue to use the Pow Wow grounds for pasture purposes, except during the period designated for the annual Pow Wow or games of sport, provided that at no time shall any animal of known vicious or dangerous disposition be permitted to pasture on the Pow Wow Grounds.

6. That James Poweshiek and/or his heirs, administrators, executors, and assigns, shall be permitted to mow the hay from the Pow Wow Grounds and store it for his/or their private use.

7. That James Poweshiek and/or his heirs, administrators, executors, and assigns, shall exact no fee for the use of the Pow Wow Grounds.

8. That this agreement shall be binding forever, except that willful or intentional violation of any of the provisions of this agreement, shall render it subject to become null and void and that the United States Government shall, at its discretion, without further ceremony, remove or destroy any or all the improvements which have been

heretofore, or shall be hereafter, placed on the above-mentioned Pow Wow Grounds by the Government.

9. That a tribunal consisting of the Tribal Council and Agency Superintendent after a hearing of the parties concerned, shall determine whether or not a violation of this agreement has been willful or intentional.

Dated January 12, 1937, the agreement was signed by James Poweshiek and approved by Ira D. Nelson, superintendent. George Youngbear acted as interpreter. James Poweshiek, Sam Slick, Charles Davenport, and Young Bear affixed their signatures for the Tama Indians, and Amos Morgan and Columbus Keahna signed for the powwow committee.

The name Poweshiek, which means "Shedding-Bear," has an important role in Iowa history. The Poweshieks are descendents of the great chief who signed peace treaties and pacts for the sale of lands with the federal government in 1824, 1837, and 1842. Poweshiek County is named for Chief Poweshiek, Old Jim's great-grandfather.

Prior to 1913 the Meskwaki Indians had met annually in what became known as "field days." These were more or less spontaneous affairs, where the Indians assembled for games, dancing, contests, and a general social gathering. The neighboring whites found these field days colorful and highly interesting, and started attending in increasing numbers. Chief Pushetonikwa foresaw the growth of this celebration, and decided it

should have some organization and planning in order to grow in the right direction and accomplish some purpose.

Accordingly, in 1912, the old chief appointed fifteen of the outstanding leaders in tribal affairs to study the situation and plan the get-together for the following year. He further proposed that these affairs be called by the Indian name, powwow instead of the meaningless "field days," and that they be planned and held each year with regularity. The men appointed by Chief Pushetnikwa were:

Young Bear	Sam Lincoln
James Poweshiek	Charles Davenport
William Wanatee	William Davenport
Charley Keosutuck	C. H. Chuck
Sam Slick	Frank Shawata
Alfred Keahna	Jim Peters
John Morgan	John Buffalo
George Kapayou	

From 1913 until 1921 the powwows were held in an open area where a summer village was erected each year. Heavy rains and floodwaters in 1915 sent the Indians scurrying for higher ground, but the powwow went on at an alternate location after a one-week postponement.

Since 1922 the Meskwaki have held their powwows on the site of the "Old Battleground," nestled in a wooded area on the banks of the Iowa River. While inaugurating the grounds that year,



Top: Tai-o-mah (Tama); Pushetonikwa; Joseph Svacina.

Center Circle: 1950 Chief of Sauk and Fox Tribal Council.

Bottom: 1949 Powwow Council.



Oklahoma Tribesman Welcomed at Tama Powwow.



Indian Mothers Exhibit Prize-Winning Babies.



Buffalo Dance Tells Story of Successful Hunt.



Eagle Dance Borrowed From Southwestern Indians.

ENTERING
SAC & FOX
INDIAN RESERVATION
ESTABLISHED JUNE 10, 1856.
POPULATION 463
ACRES 3253.76

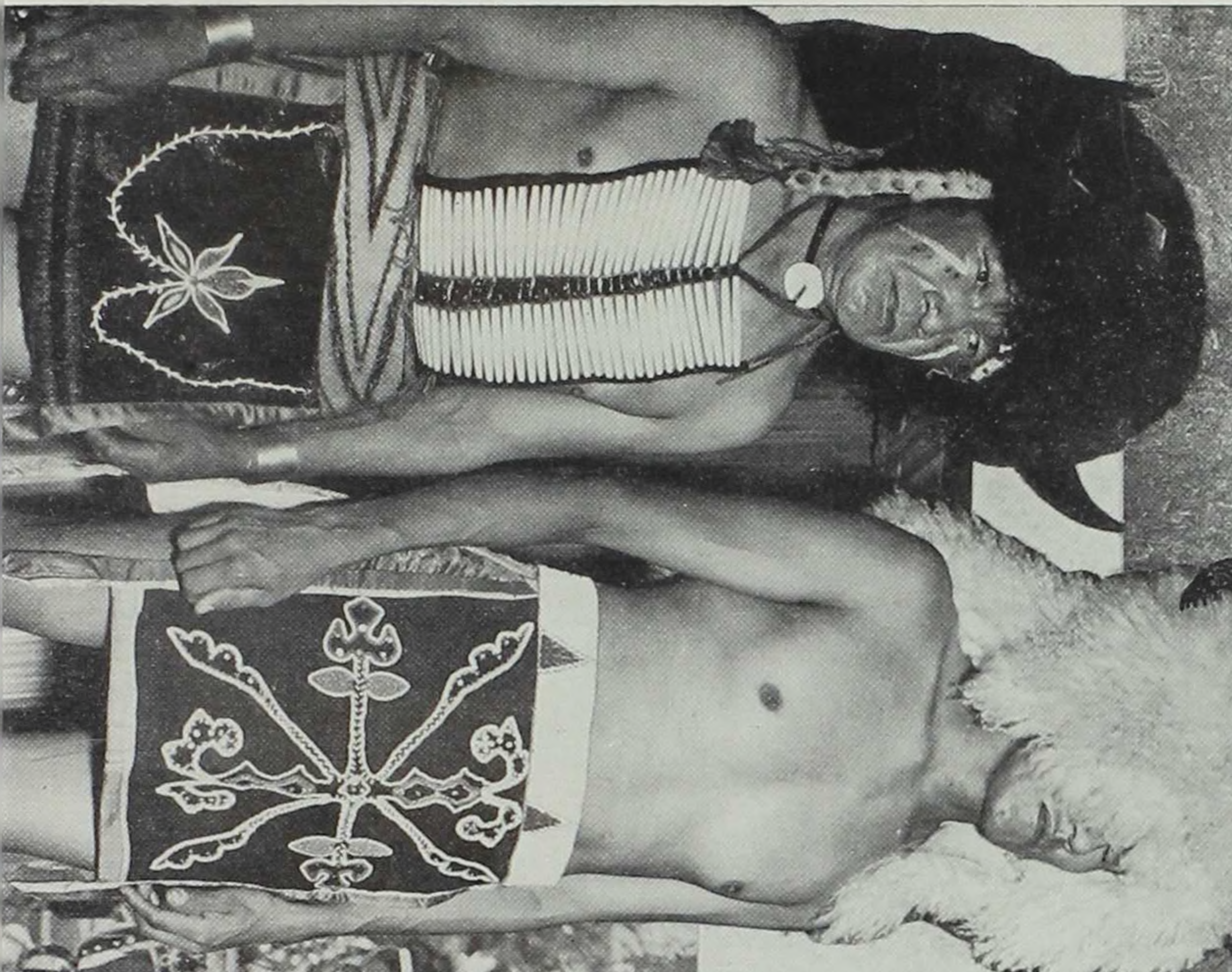


MESQ
IND
POV

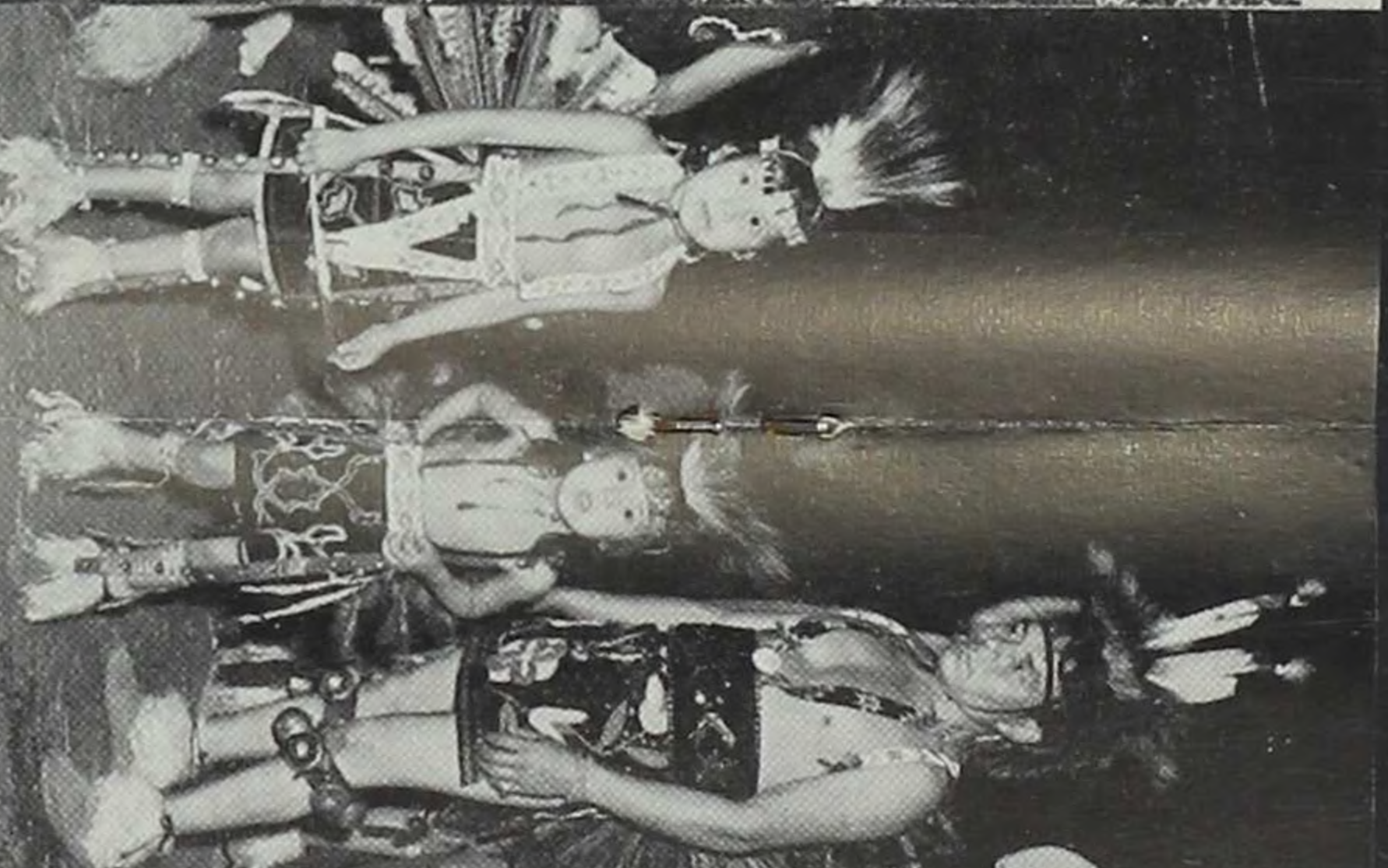




ENTERING
SAC & FOX
INDIAN RESERVATION
ESTABLISHED JUNE 10, 1896.
POPULATION 463
ACRES 3253.76

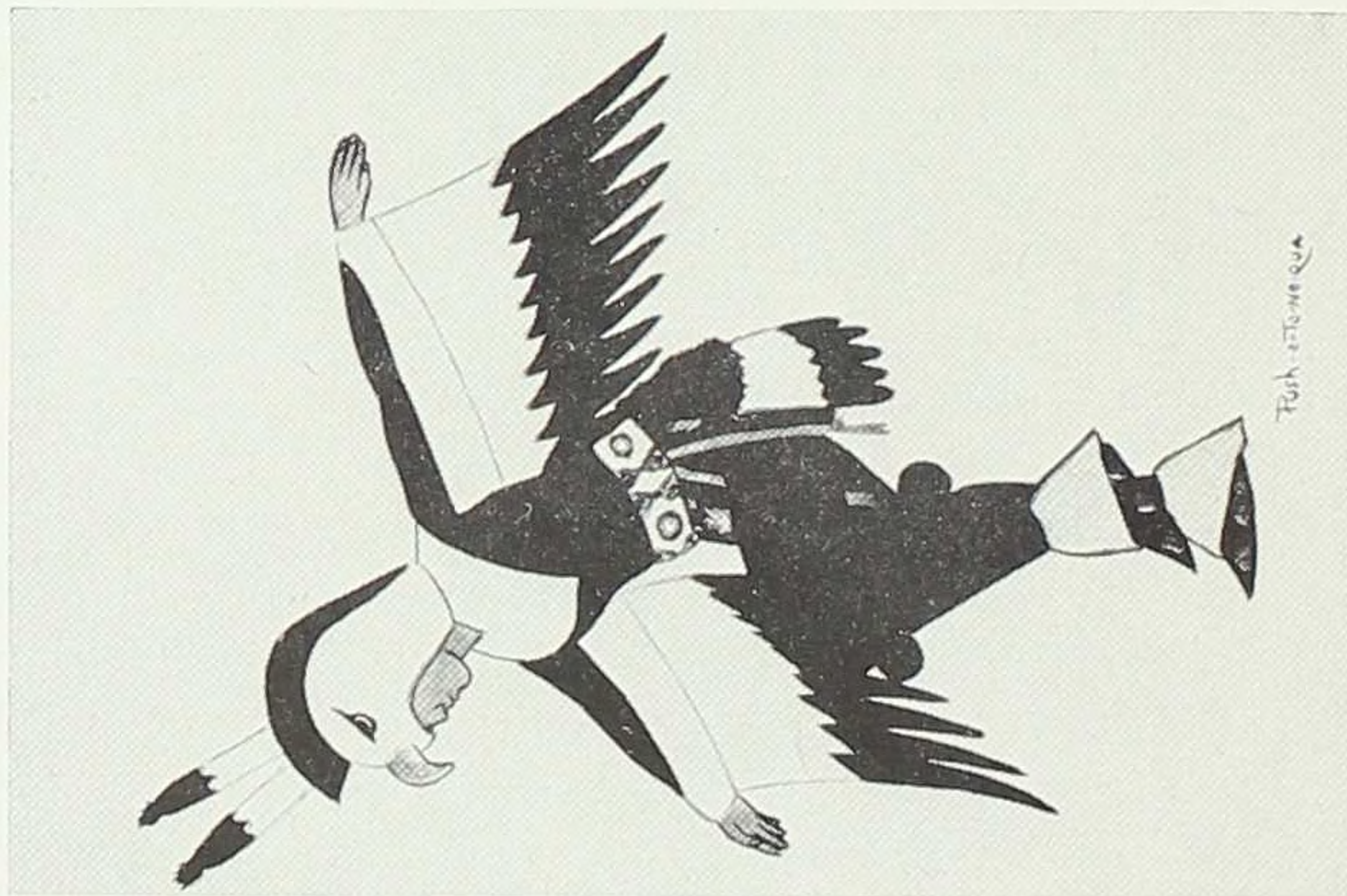


MESQUAKIE
INDIAN
POW WOW



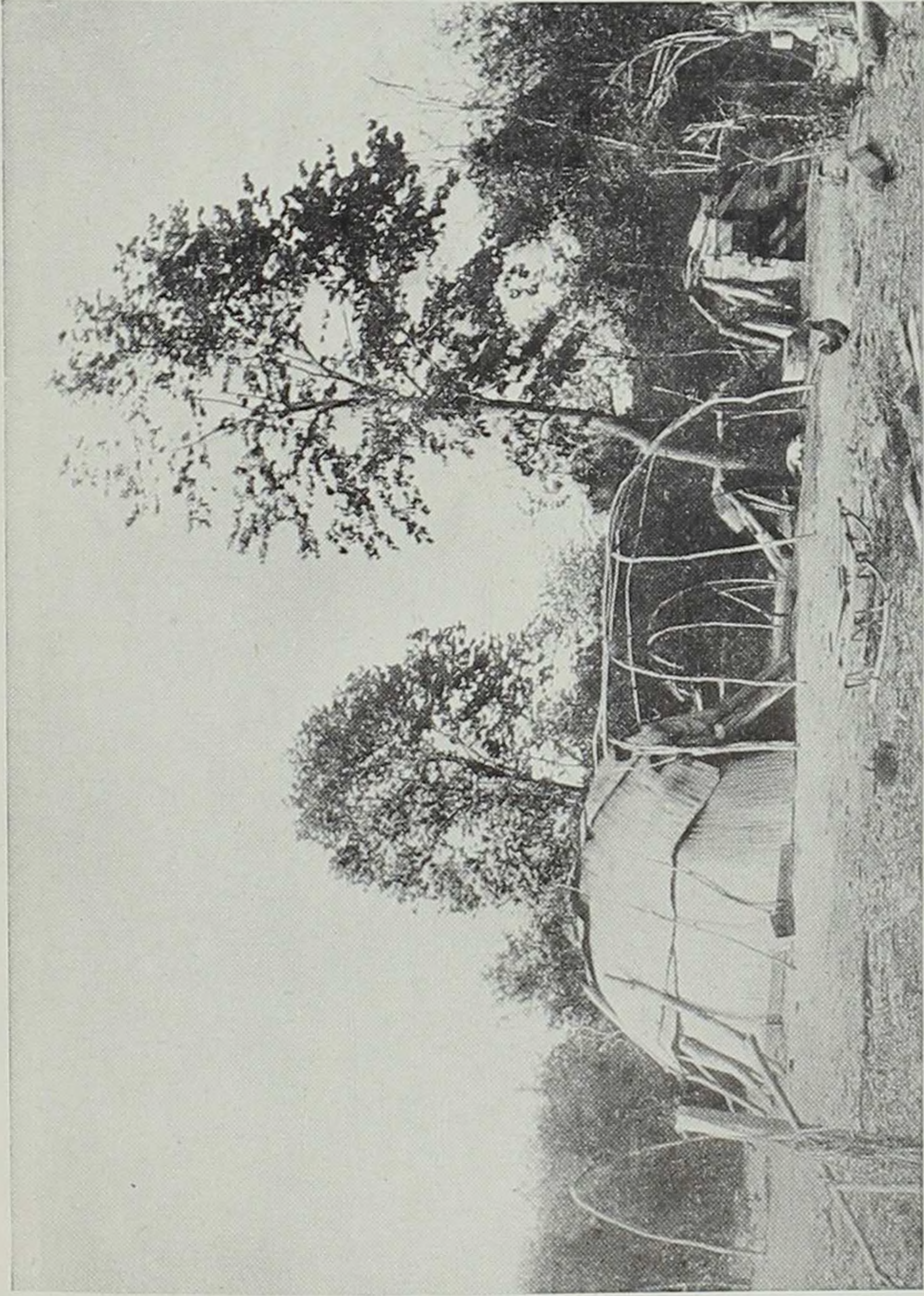


The Buffalo Dance



The Eagle Dance

Paintings by native artist Charles Pushetonequa.



From *The Pa'impeest*—February, 1926.

Home of Old Chief Matawikwa.



From *The Palimpsest*—February, 1926.

A Meskwaki Mother and Child.

A HANDBILL ADVERTISING EARLY POWWOW

INDIAN POW-WOW

AUGUST 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 1918

Mesquakie Indians

Will Appear in Tribal Dances, Indian Songs, Foot Races, Shooting Matches, LaCrosse Games and Other Tribal Customs. Music by Indian Band.

Only chance to see real Indians living tribal life of old. Worth driving miles to see.

On Mesquakie Reservation, on the
Lincoln Highway

Three Miles West of Tama, Iowa

Bring your lunch in your car and camp on picturesque reservation. Autos admitted to Pow-Wow grounds free at owner's risk. No better way to spend your vacation. Every day a big day. Program starts at 1 p. m. and 7:30 p. m. Admission, 35c; Children 25c, every day, Sunday included. Soldiers and Sailors admitted free. Tickets for sale at Jos. Svacina's Harness Shop, Tama. Indians will give 5 per cent of net proceeds to American Red Cross.

PETER OLD BEAR,
JOHN BEAR,
JOHN WATONASE,
SAM SLICK,

GEO. KAPAYOU,
CHARLEY DAVENPORT,
ISAAC WANATTE,
Committee.

the council decided to double the four-day policy, and festivities flourished from Sunday to Sunday for a full eight-day period. As a consequence, the year 1922 still looms as the biggest powwow to date.

Two white men were prominent in assisting the Indians in their early powwows. Joe Svacina, proprietor of a harness shop in Tama, devoted almost thirty years to helping the Meskwaki in this project. Called *Wa-bi-ke-ti-wah* (White Eagle) by the grateful Indians, Mr. Svacina was a close friend of Chief Pushetonikwa until the "last government-recognized chief" died in 1919. As the scope of the Meskwaki powwow continued to grow, it was Mr. Svacina who guided and directed the Indians in the business aspects of their venture.

Edgar R. Harlan, curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, located at Des Moines, began to visit and get acquainted with the Meskwaki in 1917. In 1919 he was called upon by the powwow committee to assist them in promoting the event, which he did successfully. It became the custom of early powwows for Curator Harlan to give interpretative talks on the history and customs of the Meskwaki and also to arrange for other speakers of importance, such as governors, senators, and clergymen. The Indians gave Mr. Harlan the name *Me-shi-ke*, meaning Turtle.

The powwow continued to grow steadily from 1913 until the huge week-long affair in 1922, but

it was always a more or less spontaneous affair brought about by the efforts of a relatively few people. In 1924, however, the Indians realized the need for solid organization, and great strides were taken in that direction. A powwow association was formed, officers were chosen, and the various jobs necessary in staging a powwow were divided up into committees. The Constitution adopted read as follows:

I

The foregoing organization will be known as the Mesquakie Indian Pow Wow association. To arrange the programs, the general up-keep of the grounds, buildings, amphitheatre, and give the annual Pow Wow for the benefit of the participating Indians and to lay a fund of which will be known as the National fund to be at the Tribal Council's disposal for the benefit of the whole tribe. It is understood that the committee will form rules and regulations governing same, of which may be changed from time to time, as the committee sees fit. The fundamental principles of morality will reign supreme at all Pow Wows.

II

Only Indians of the Mesquakie Reservation can be members, except by special order from the Tribal Council. They must be of good character, conservative and to some degree possess knowledge of the tribal affairs. An efficiency to deal with the business of the Pow Wow will be counted upon as the most essential.

III

All officers and Committee will be elected at the end of two years, during the month of February after the preceding officers and committee have given their final reports. However they will be required to give reports an-

nually. During the period of their term, it will be the duty of each officer and committeeman to sacrifice his time in giving full attention to fulfilling of all the requirements of their respective duties. All of the business meetings will be called at a convenient time, so it will not interfere with the members own home interests, of which may cause the neglect of stock, crops, etc. The Executive Committee will call such meetings when necessary.

Jonas Poweshiek, President

William Davenport, Vice-President

Edward Davenport, Secretary

The six officers elected for the 1925 powwow were:

President	Jonas Poweshiek
Vice-President	William Davenport
Secretary	Edward Davenport
Ass't Secretary	George Youngbear
Treasurer	Albert Davenport
Ass't Treasurer	Floyd Keahna

Those chosen for the powwow committee were:

Frank Push	William Wanatee
George Ward	John Jones
Percy Bear	Oliver Lincoln
George Pete	Charles Keosutuck
John Youngbear	John Papakie
Arthur Bear	John Robert

These men were divided up to carry on the work of the following jobs: ceremonial, traffic, reception, commissary, ticket, interpreting, powwow grounds, chief of police, superintendent of exhibit hall, chief clerk, and athletic director.

The newly formed powwow association set about to write up a constitution and a statement of purpose, which they did with admirable dispatch. The constitution still stands today, unhampered and unaltered by amendments. The statement of purpose, on the other hand, reflected some of the fears and problems of early day powwows which are practically nonexistent today. The statement as printed below indicates the sincere desire of the Tama Indians to keep out those undesirable elements that normally frequent such events.

Tama, Iowa. June 2, 1925

THE POW WOW ASSOCIATION HAS AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING:

I am in favor of having our annual Pow Wow, to help some of the Indians that are unemployed, to make the Pow Wow possible.

Then we desire to have some experienced Indians and white men to sell tickets at the gate.

We do not wish to have any sort of gambling going on in the Pow Wow grounds, any stealing will be thoroughly investigated, I am in favor of having a clean moral Pow Wow.

We don't want no wild women on the grounds.

Any men caught giving women any intoxicating liquor will be arrested and turned over to the law.

The Association as a whole will look after the situation with the co-operation of the police force.

The Committee and police force will be responsible in carrying on the coming events.

The Committee will help in stamping out all the evils that may arise during Pow Wow.

Signed	Interpreter
Arthur Bear	George Young Bear
John Young Bear	
Percy Bear	
John Roberts	
George Ward	
Chas. Keosutuck X	
William Wanatee	
John Jones	

Features of the powwow change slightly from year to year, and there is variation in presentation and ceremonials. For the most part, however, the powwows have a pattern even though no two performances are identical. Competition in sewing, agriculture, and handiwork remains much the same from year to year, although the meager awards vary. In 1924, for instance, the Indian who submitted the ten best ears of squaw corn received a cash prize of \$1.00; while the first prize for the same effort in 1933 brought only 50c.

The displays and competitions of twenty-five years ago are just as representative a showing as today's listing of premiums. Following is the list of events the hopeful Meskwaki of a quarter-century past scanned as he anticipated cash prizes for his labors of the year.

Probably the one thing that stands foremost in the memory of visitors is the native dancing, performed in colorful costuming to the throbbing, pulsating rhythm of the tom-toms, the syncopated jangling of sleighbell adornments, and the weird,

AN EARLY POWWOW PREMIUM LIST

PREMIUM LIST
BABY SHOW

	First	Second	Third
Best developed baby.....	\$3.50	\$2.00	\$1.00
\$1.00 to all entries.			
Best dressed baby.....	2.00	1.50	

DANCERS

Best dancer	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$3.50
-------------------	---------	--------	--------

FOOTRACES, 50 YARDS

Boys under 12 years.....	1.00	.50	
Girls under 12 years.....	1.00	.50	
100-yard dash for men.....	2.50	1.50	
Bow and arrow contest.....	2.00	1.50	1.00
Bow and arrow games.....	2.00	1.50	1.00
LaCrosse ball throwing contest.....	2.50	1.50	1.00
LaCrosse game (winning team).....	\$1.00	each to winners	
Tug-of-war	5.00		

CAMPS

Best wick-i-up	\$2.00	\$1.00	
Best teepee	2.00	1.00	

INDIAN EXHIBIT

Percy Bear, Superintendent

10 ears yellow corn.....	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$.75
10 ears white corn.....	2.00	1.00	.75
10 ears calico corn.....	2.00	1.00	.75
10 ears squaw corn.....	1.00	.75	.50
Half bushel oats	1.00	.75	.50
Half bushel wheat	1.00	.75	.50
One peck early potatoes.....	1.00	.75	.50
One peck late potatoes.....	1.00	.75	.50
Best quart beans, any variety.....	1.00	.75	.50
One large pumpkin.....	.75	.50	.25
Two squashes, any variety.....	.75	.50	.25
Best display of vegetables raised by one Indian	2.00	1.00	.75
Best quart of Indian dried corn.....	.75	.50	.25
Two samples corn on stalk.....	.75	.50	.25

SHEAF DISPLAY

Bundles not less than 3 inches through

Wheat	\$1.00	\$.50	\$.25
Oats	1.00	.50	.25
Clover	1.00	.50	.25
Timothy	1.00	.50	.25
Wild hay .....	.75	.50	.25
Best collection of native grasses.....	.75	.50	.25

SEWING, HANDIWORK, ETC.

Best fine shirt for men (hand made)....	\$.50	\$.25	
Best display of crochet work.....	.50	.25	
Best patch work quilt.....	.50	.25	
Best display of canned fruit, put up by one person	1.00	.75	\$.25
Best moccasins (pair) .....	.75	.50	.25
Best leggins (pair) .....	.75	.50	.25
Best belt .....	.50	.25	
Best fob .....	.50	.25	
Best bracelets and rings .....	.50	.25	
Best money bag .....	.50	.25	
Best necklace .....	.50	.25	
Best display of bead work by single In- dians	1.00	.75	.50
Best collection of old Indian relics.....	1.00	.75	.50
Most kinds of plants used for medicine.....	1.00	.50	.25
Most kinds of plants used for food.....	1.00	.50	.25
Best mat for wick-i-up.....	1.00	.50	.25

high-pitched chanting of the Indians. The wild, frenzied, and inspired dances are performed by the men, and the highlight of the entire powwow comes when the prominent Indian dancers vie for the title of "Men's Champion Dancer." This title is bestowed only after an elimination contest judged by the older men, all former dancers themselves.

The dancing of the women is markedly different. The squaws and young girls participate in groups, and move about slowly and rhythmically, confining all intricate movement to their moccasined feet.

To preserve the tribal dances, the Meskwaki choose a Chief Dancer, whose duty it is to memorize all of the intricate steps and movements of the many dances — not only of the Meskwaki, but of dances "borrowed" from other tribes. Included in the repertoire currently are such dances as the friendship, squaw, Shawnee, snake, pipe, bear, buffalo, shield, rabbit, swan, bean, green corn, and Meskwaki War Dance. These dances are deeply etched in the mind of Chief Dancer John Papakie, whose instructing duties are made easier by parents who start their children dancing at an early age.

In the years following World War I the late Billy Jones, a Meskwaki who had served overseas with the 88th Iowa Division, presented a special interpretative dance that always pleased the

crowd. He depicted, through the medium of Indian dancing, his experiences as a soldier in American training camps and while overseas.

One of the favorites in recent years is the eagle dance, borrowed from the Indians of the Southwest and performed by Frank and Charles Pushtonikwa, grandsons of the last government-recognized chief of the Meskwaki. Charles Pushtonikwa is considered the tribal artist and has won honors with his oil and water color paintings. While studying at the art school in Santa Fe, New Mexico, he learned the eagle dance and designed the costumes now worn when this dance is presented. Charles entered a war poster contest and won, with the government purchasing his poster. During World War II he was commissioned to originate and paint the design used on bombers in the Fifth Bomber Command in the South Pacific. He was asked to submit a painting from the "woodland Indians" in a recent art contest among southwest Indians. His entry was later purchased by the sponsors of the exhibit. Six of his works have been purchased by the Tama County Historical Society.

The ceremonials and features throughout the history of the powwow have been varied and interesting. For many years an all-Indian band offered concert numbers for visitors. Lacrosse games have been a perennial favorite — often the Meskwaki team plays a team composed of members of visit-

ing Indian tribes from several states that regularly attend the Tama Powwow.

In 1919 the Indians danced the scalp dance in public for the first time, honoring the four soldiers from the tribe who helped America in the victory over the Kaiser.

The year 1920 was marked by daily Indian councils, similar to those wherein treaties were made between Indians and the whites. Another feature that year was pony packing and moving, showing how Indians moved from place to place before the coming of the white man. This was done to the accompaniment of the native women singing the moving song.

Several powwows featured a tug-of-war between five braves and five white men for a prize of five dollars. Many times the theme of the powwow was centered around the tribal Thanksgiving festivities, thanking Providence for favoring them with abundant crops and freedom from pestilence.

The ancient Meskwaki squaw game was shown to the public for the first time in 1929, and the 1931 powwow was highlighted with an Indian pageant portraying picturesque scenes from tribal history. In 1932 a spectacular feature commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Black Hawk War was presented in pageant form. The Meskwaki reconstructed Black Hawk's village and re-enacted his war council, dances, and treaties.

Visitors in 1934 saw a special ceremonial per-

formed for the first time in public. Entitled "The Grand Reception of the Chiefs," it depicted the pomp and glory of the head chiefs of ancient times, elaborate costuming, and Indian life in an ancient village.

The Meskwaki touched both a new high and a new low in 1939. It was a "powwow of contrasts." An Indian wedding ceremony was presented daily for the first time in public, revealing a truly beautiful bit of tribal ceremony. Mrs. Claudine Humble Rolfs, an experienced pageant director from Omaha helped direct a performance of "Hiawatha," adapted from the famous poem by Longfellow. The Indians staged a highly commendable performance in costume, with music, dances, and oratory. This was also the year, however, when the Indian powwow sported a portable dance floor — and visitors could dance to the music of Mike Vavra and his Bohemians, or Ralph Slade and his widely advertised "Sweetest Band in Iowaland.

Other years there were such things as a greased pig contest, a ten-minute wrestling match, or a sham battle between Indians and a stagecoach. The latter included the capture, scalping, and burning at the stake of a white maiden — simulated, of course. Once in the early twenties there was a race between an Indian on a pony and a Ford car. The race was for a half mile, and the driver was handicapped to the extent that he had

to crank the car and get into the seat after the starting signal was given.

Baseball has played an important part in the festivities, too, over the years. The Meskwaki are rightfully proud of their prowess on the diamond, and they have played a number of Iowa's leading semipro baseball teams at powwow time.

Old Jim Poweshiek, before his death in 1950, could not recall how many times he had given flute solo performances at the powwow, but his musical interpretations on this instrument were long a standard and integral part of the ceremony.

Archery, foot races, pony races, and even high diving and lifesaving exhibitions have appeared on the powwow agenda in the past. The baby contest is an every-year occurrence, and prizes are awarded for the healthiest baby and the best-dressed baby.

Powwows were not held in 1943 and 1944 because of the war, and the 1945 affair was merely a small jubilee held in September to celebrate the close of World War II. In 1949 the Meskwaki held their evening performances under electric lights for the first time; previously the evening performances had been lighted with Delco light plant units. However, even the modern miracle of electricity has failed to remove the mystic feeling that the visitor is witnessing something brilliant and colorful out of the dim, faded pages of the past.

Each powwow brings visiting Indians from other tribes, usually dressed in their own tribal vestment. In recent years the Meskwaki have played host to the Winnebago Indians from Nebraska and Wisconsin, the Potawatomi from Kansas and Wisconsin, the Sioux from South Dakota, the Kickapoo from Kansas, the Chippewa from Minnesota, a Mohawk from New York, and their kinsmen, the Sauk and Fox from Oklahoma.

There are more than five hundred Meskwaki Indians who are residents in the state of Iowa, the cherished home of their ancestors. As a tribe, they own some 3,200 acres of land in the Iowa River valley in Tama County, purchased by the Indians with their own money. This is their collective farm — managed and cultivated by them — where they live, study and have their religious services. Many years ago Iowa gave them legal authority to own tribal land and property, and the title is held in trust for them. They pay taxes, and those who are qualified are voters.

The Meskwaki tribe is of Algonquian or Woodland stock. They formerly lived on the Atlantic coast, then moved westward through New York and Canada, and while in Wisconsin during the early fur-trading days formed a federation with their kinsmen — the Sac, or Sauk. Meskwaki means "people of the red earth," but they were called the Reynards, or Foxes, by the early traders. They still prefer to be called Meskwaki,

the name by which they are known by other Indian tribes.

When the Louisiana Purchase was made in 1803, several Indian tribes lived in or along the borders of Iowaland. The Sauk and Fox lived along the Mississippi, the Iowa along the Des Moines, the Oto, Omaha, and Missouri Indians along the Missouri River, and the Sioux in northern Iowa. At later dates some Potawatomi and Winnebago Indians were given new homes in Iowa by the government, but were eventually moved elsewhere. Now, for many decades the Meskwaki have been the only tribe of Indians in Iowa. A few Potawatomi have been taken into fellowship, and there are some Winnebago associated with, but not members of, the tribe.

By the Treaty of 1842 the Sauk and Fox Indians sold one-third of their claim to what is now Iowa to the United States for 12c an acre. In 1845, when the Sauk and Fox were removed to Kansas, many of them became extremely homesick for Iowa. Finally, in 1856, they stole away from their Kansas reservation and led their ponies back to the land where their fathers were buried.

Today they have a genuinely democratic government, they elect a council of managers, and the council has a chief. The older tribesmen cling to the cherished tradition of the past, while the younger generation holds progress as their keyword. Formerly about fifteen clans existed among

the Meskwaki, such as the present Wolf, Bear, Thunder, Fox, Eagle, and Buffalo clans; while the Beaver, Tree, Sturgeon, and Fish clans are dying out. The younger generation is less interested in the variations of the rituals observed by each clan. There are about eighty unwritten clan songs, all memorized and sung in their regular order. The Meskwaki language is unwritten and taught only by word of mouth in the homes. This, coupled with the fact that the language changes gradually from one generation to another, indicates that it may eventually become lost. Dr. Truman Michelson from the Smithsonian Institution, has spent many summers trying to secure the key to the Meskwaki language. His efforts have thus far resulted primarily in a partial recording of their language and songs.

The Tama Powwow is one of Iowa's most colorful events. Young and old alike enjoy the brilliant pagentry that each year marks this interesting spectacle. To those well-posted in Iowa history the Powwow opens a veritable floodgate of historical episodes covering more than two centuries of history—the battle of the Des Moines on April 19, 1735; the Fox Indians granting Julien Dubuque the right to work their lead mines in 1788; the exciting incidents surrounding the war of 1812 in Iowaland; the unhappy pages that mark the story of the Black Hawk War and its aftermath. Citizens of the Hawkeye State are

fortunate that this last vestige of the red man in Iowa still remains to link them with the colorful story of yesteryears.

DICK SPENCER III