

The Mesquakie Indian Settlement in 1905

by L. Edward Purcell

In the summer of 1905, Duren J. H. Ward, an Iowa City minister and lecturer, spent two months at the Mesquakie Indian Settlement in Tama County. During that time he attempted to record the history and culture of the tribe. He was sponsored by the State Historical Society of Iowa which wished to learn more about the Mesquakies, sometimes mistakenly called the Fox, or the Sauk and Fox. These Indians had lived in Iowa since at least the last decades of the eighteenth century. When Ward visited them 125 years later, they still kept many of the ways of their forebears—living on their own land, disputing and discussing, working and loving.

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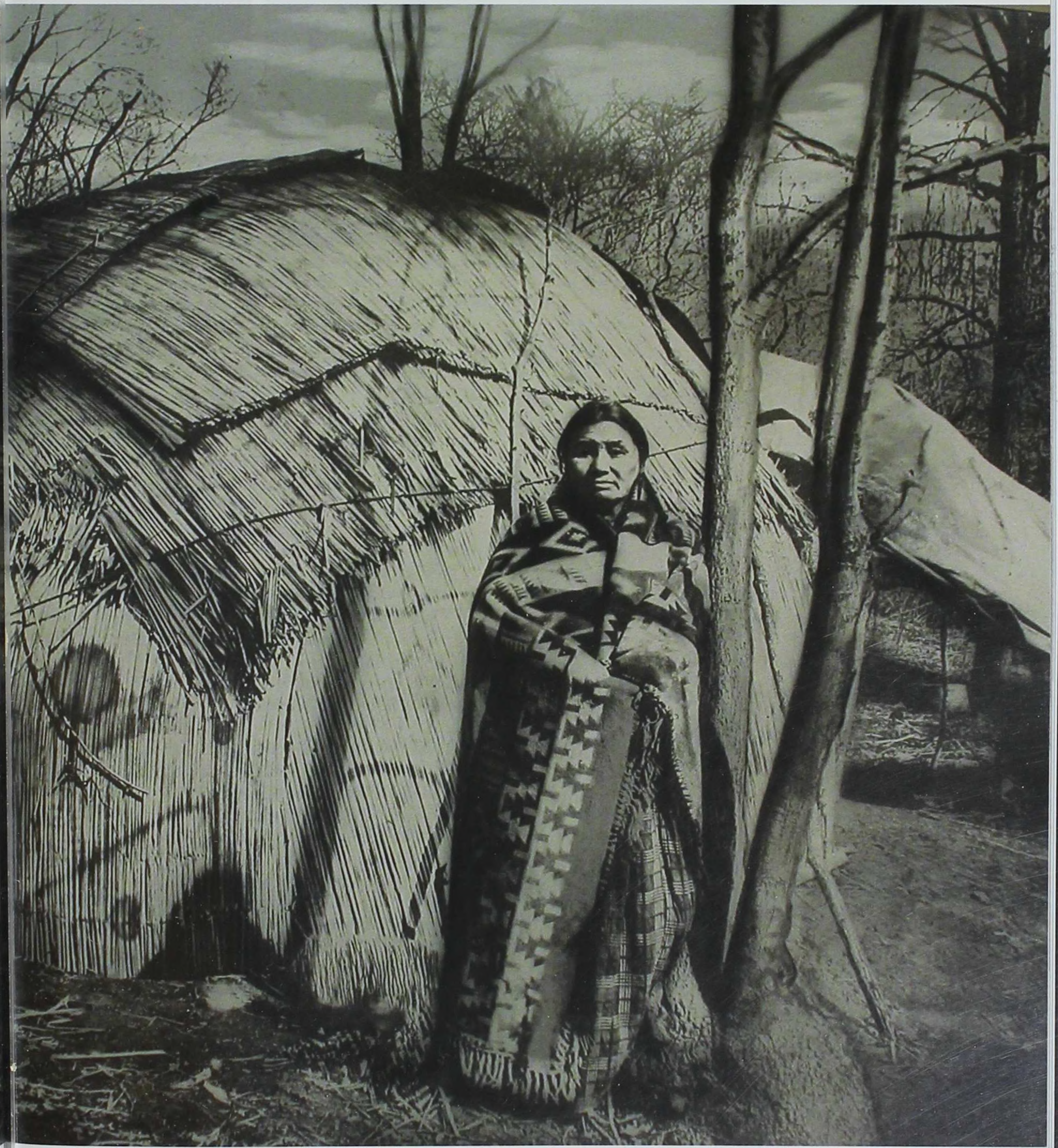
never numerous—were at last defeated by the combined forces of the French and their Indian allies. By the late 1700s, only a handful of Mesquakies had survived the killing. Gathering with their cousins, the Sauk, the remnants of the Mesquakies abandoned the forests and lakes for the prairies along the Father of Waters. While white Americans disputed with the British the right of the colonies to be free and independent, the Mesquakies migrated down the Mississippi in search of the same goals. When, in 1803, events in the faraway courts of Europe handed political control of their new home to the United States, the Mesquakies were concerned with little but summer planting, winter hunts, and warring upon the Sioux and the Osage.

The Mesquakies signed their first treaty with the United States in 1804. This touching of the quill by several Sauks and Mesquakies (all of whom were none the better for drinking brandy) set a precedent. The U.S. Government by this treaty established formal relations with a tribe it called the "Sauk and Fox," an idea which persists to the present day. Although closely related by language, custom, and common war-making, the Mesquakies and the

Na-na-wa-chi, a Mesquakie woman born in 1862, stands beside a traditional wikiup made of overlapping mats of cattail reeds, on the Mesquakie Settlement about 1905. (Editor's note: In 1974, when this article was first published, Mesquakie was the spelling used by most historians. Today, Meskwaki is generally preferred.)



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Sauks thought of themselves as two distinct tribes.

The Mesquakies considered themselves at peace with the United States, although many Sauks fought with Tecumseh at Tippecanoe and with the British in the War of 1812. The Sauks harbored a band of discontents led by Black Hawk. Black Hawk's anti-American belligerence and the fumbling of white politicians and militia led to the disastrous Black Hawk War in 1832. The repercussions of the War jolted both tribes and led to their removal from Iowa. The punitive treaty fixed on the Sauks after the War took Mesquakie land as well. A further series of treaties in the 1830s and 1840s took more land, and Iowa soon became the white man's domain.

In 1847, the Mesquakies were removed with the Sauks to a reservation in Kansas. While many small groups remained behind, a large contingent of the tribe took up new homes along the Osage River. The new setting was far from congenial, and soon the Mesquakies planned a return to the lush environs of Iowa. The plan became a reality in 1856 when the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, sitting in special session in Iowa City, passed a law allowing the Mesquakies to live and buy land in the state. Governor James Grimes acted as trustee for the tribe in signing the deed to the first eighty acres of bottom land purchased along the Iowa River in Tama County.

The gathering of the tribe in Iowa, which had begun even before the legislators acted, continued during the next several years. By 1867, several hundred Mesquakies lived on their own Settlement. Surviving difficult years when the Federal Government refused to pay the annuities due from the original sale of the Iowa prairie, the Mesquakies eventually won the right to remain in Iowa.

Remarkably, the Mesquakies enjoyed the long-term support and protection of the state government. Governor Grimes's successors in office seemed to regard seriously the trust placed upon them for the well-being of the tribe. At the behest of state officials the Federal Government agreed to pay the tribe their annuities in Iowa. When the money was finally and reluctantly paid, it was used to purchase more land. Whenever troubles threatened, the Mesquakies usually turned first to the Great Father in Des Moines.

Despite the fact that corn fields and livestock were rapidly occupying open land, the Mesquakies continued throughout most of the 1800s to follow their traditional cycle of summer farming and winter hunting. Roaming far from the Settlement, family groups hunted



Left: Tribal secretary Cha-ka-ta-ko-si (C. H. Chuck) holds the manuscript history he prepared for anthropologist Duren Ward (right), who visited the Mesquakie Settlement in the summer months of 1905.

the disappearing game which provided food and clothing. They camped in the fields of the early white settlers and occasionally begged a hand-out. There was a remarkable tolerance for the Mesquakies among the growing white population of the state. Even during the panic years of the so-called Spirit Lake Massacre and the Great Sioux Uprising, the Mesquakies were left in peace. By 1905 and Duren Ward's visit, the tribe was firmly rooted.

Prompted by Ward's interest in anthropology and sociology, the Historical Society undertook a systematic study of the history of the tribe. While many in the state knew of the Mesquakies and their background, little formal attention had been paid to them.

Ward was an ideal choice for the assignment and, indeed, probably suggested the project. Born in Canada, educated at Hillsdale College and at Harvard University, Ward spent several years of study in Germany and held a Ph.D. from Leipzig University. His career ranged from the classroom, to the lecture hall, to the pulpit. He had been called to the ministry of the Iowa City Unitarian Church in 1902. Moving easily among the intellectuals of the University town, Ward was instrumental in forming the Iowa Anthropological Association. The key members of the State Historical Society's Board of Curators were members both of his congregation and the Association. They were also, to a man, professors at the University of Iowa, which at the time housed the Historical Society.

Ward had undertaken several archaeological field trips under the auspices of the Society in 1904. When one of his trips took him along the Iowa River valley into Iowa County, he probably first encountered the

Mesquakies. This had been native ground of the tribe for several generations, and the Indians' friendship with the German religious community in the Amanas was longstanding. At about the time the tribe purchased its first parcel of land, the Community of True Inspiration, as the Amana colonists called themselves, was founded fifty miles further down river. The Mesquakies traded game and pelts for medical care and the wonderful woolen fabrics woven by the religious colonists.

After a brief visit to the Settlement in 1904, Ward began to plan a full-scale expedition for the summer of the next year. The Curators of the Society appropriated \$200 for the project, and Benjamin Shambaugh, Chairman of the Board's Executive Committee, solicited letters of introduction for Ward from Iowa Governor A. B. Cummins. In the meantime, President George MacLean of the University appointed Ward Lecturer in Anthropology. Ward chose a student, Leroy Elliott, to assist him during the summer. Elliott, also a member of Ward's church, proved to be invaluable. Following a preliminary visit early in June, Ward and Elliott moved into a frame house on the Settlement on July 7. There followed two months of observation, research, and discussion with tribal members.

For the Mesquakies, 1905 was a relatively peaceful year. The struggle for recognition by the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs had been won, although as late as the 1880s officials in Washington continued to insist the tribe belonged in Oklahoma, where the Sauks had been moved in 1869. The Settlement comprised 2,998 acres by 1905, bought in twenty-six different land purchases over the previous fifty years. Ward set Elliott to the task of ferreting this information out of the county land records in the Tama County Court House in Toledo, and the assistant drew up a table of purchases which detailed the growth of the Settlement. He learned that the tribe had paid \$85,635—an average price of \$28.50 per acre—for its land. (The Settlement would grow to its present size of approximately 3,300 acres within the next few years.) The question of the permanence of the Mesquakies' home seemed at rest.

However placid the summer of 1905, the memories of recent events—often bitter memories—were fresh in the minds of the tribe. When he spoke to tribal leaders, Ward found evidence of the political and economic problems which had occupied much of the Mesquakies' energies.

A good deal of credit must be given Ward for the manner in which he set about collecting information. The recording of interviews was less than common in Ward's day, but he saw the value of a precise written record of orally transmitted history. He hired a local ste-



Push-e-to-ne-qua, born in 1842 along the Iowa River near present-day Marengo, was the tribal chief in 1905 and one of the first Mesquakie interviewed by Ward.

nographer and also engaged two interpreters, Me-skwa-pu-swa (Joe Tesson, the official U.S. Government man) and Pye-pa-ha (Jim Peters). Ward then sought out tribal spokesmen and had their statements interpreted and recorded on the spot. The typed transcriptions of these statements form the bulk of the Ward Mesquakie Manuscripts Collection now held by the

State Historical Society of Iowa. Ward was an early practitioner of what is known today as oral history.

One of Ward's first formal interviews was with Push-e-to-ne-qua, the recognized chief. As head of the tribal council, Push-e-to-ne-qua had been the center of a longstanding political dispute among the Mesquakies. Shortly after the last hereditary chief, Ma-mi-nwa-ni-kwa, had died in 1882, a break in the chiefly line occurred. The next heir, Mu-kwa-pu-shi-to, was passed over by the tribal council in favor of Push-e-to-ne-qua. The new chief was the adopted son of Poweshiek, the leader who had sold the last parcel of Mesquakie land in 1842 and led his tribe into Kansas exile. Despite the fact that Push-e-to-ne-qua had assumed leadership, a faction among the tribe supported Mu-kwa-pu-shi-to as the true chief by birthright. Push-e-to-ne-qua consolidated his position by a slick maneuver in 1896 when he persuaded the U.S. Indian Agent, Horace Rebok, to lobby for federal recognition of Push-e-to-ne-qua's status. Rebok and J. R. Caldwell, a local jurist, secured for Push-e-to-ne-qua recognition as the Mesquakie chief and an additional personal annuity of \$600 per year.

Push-e-to-ne-qua was an astute politician, and he knew when and how to cultivate the whites who surrounded the Settlement. When Rebok gave up the office of agent in favor of William Malin in 1902, Push-e-to-ne-qua continued his policy of friendship with the new official. Although he could neither speak nor read English fluently, the chief was well informed about local white politics. As Judge Caldwell put it: "He mingles freely with the whites of the surrounding country, and judiciously courts the friendship and favor of influential men of the neighboring towns."

The chief was aided by the tribal interpreter, Joe Tesson. (Many Mesquakies were beginning to adopt English names, especially if they had frequent contacts with whites.) Tesson was half French and had traveled extensively. He had served in the Nebraska volunteer cavalry on the Devil's Lake Expedition in 1862 and lived previously in both Nebraska and New Mexico. He had been the official interpreter of the tribe since the 1880s. He sat on the tribal council and served as the chief's aide in dealing with whites.

Ward met the chief and Tesson on July 17 for dinner and discussion at the Clifton House in Tama. Elliott and W. S. Stoops, a former teacher on the Settlement, joined the party. Push-e-to-ne-qua, speaking through Tesson, informed Ward of the background of the tribe and the political dispute. He told Ward that the Mesquakies desired harmony, but that there could be no forcing of the issue, since: "The Meskwaki [Ward's spelling] never yields to coercion. Only fair play and open recognition

can settle their disputes or change their public opinion." Push-e-to-ne-qua explained that the opposition party was strong and stubborn. The new pretender to the chieftainship was Ta-ta-pa-sha, Mu-kwa-pu-shi-to having died in a recent small-pox epidemic.

Ward met again with the chief and with most of the tribal council on July 20. Benjamin Shambaugh traveled from Iowa City to join the discussion. Both men spoke at length on the mission of the Historical Society and how they wished to honor the tribe. Shambaugh's speech must have been paternal if not patronizing. In an earlier letter to Governor Cummins he had suggested that the Governor not mention that Ward was on a scientific inquiry, "as that might scare the Indians," and the Governor should include his official seal to impress their "Red Brethren."

One of the major issues Ward discovered in the tribal dispute was education. The conservative faction of the tribe, which backed the dispossessed chief, was against any cooperation with white man's ways, since they believed this would lead to the loss of Mesquakie identity. The tribe had long resisted enumeration and earlier had refused to enroll with the agent even though it meant the loss of annuity payments. The same attitude held for education.

Rebok, while he was agent, had formed the local Indian Rights Association, a group of whites devoted to the cause of Indian "welfare." The major goal of the group was to educate Indian children in white-run schools and thus equip them to live in the white world. It was to this end that Rebok lobbied for a new state law which would relinquish Iowa's official responsibility for the Mesquakies to the Federal Government. The return of responsibility to the Indian Office in Washington would allow Rebok to receive Federal funds to build an Indian training school at Toledo, Iowa. The agent was successful, and in 1896, the Iowa General Assembly voted to turn trusteeship and responsibility for the tribe over to the U.S. Department of the Interior. Even though \$35,000 was appropriated to build the school in 1899, the official transfer did not occur until 1908. In that year, the Secretary of the Interior assumed the role of trustee for the tribal lands, the position originally held by the governor of the state.

The building of a school was one thing, but getting the Mesquakies to attend proved to be another. Rebok, Malin, and A. G. Nellis (the superintendent of the Toledo Indian Training School) met serious resistance. While their motives may have been pure and worthy, the group failed utterly to understand that few



Children stand in uniform at the Toledo Indian Training School. They are probably all Winnebago and Sioux. The Mesquakie had resisted forced assimilation; a court case won by Li-li-ya-pu-ka-chi (below) ruled that Iowa could not compel their attendance.

Mesquakies were interested in becoming white. The older members of the tribe, especially those like Ma-ta-wi-kwa, the last war chief who had led parties against the Comanche and Pawnee during the Kansas interlude, were committed to preserving the traditional Mesquakie way of life. Realizing the resistance of the elders, Rebok made an attempt to capture the children. The local court appointed Malin the guardian of several Mesquakie children who the Indian Rights group claimed were orphans or unattached to a family. As their guardian, Malin compelled them to attend the school.

This plan did produce students for the school, but was upset when a sixteen-year-old girl, Li-li-ya-pu-ka-chi, ran away from the classroom and sought refuge in the

Mesquakie village. Malin brought her back by force, but was served with a writ of habeas corpus from the Federal court at Dubuque. A local Tama attorney, John W. Lamb, filed a suit on behalf of the girl. The decision of the court held that neither Rebok nor Malin had any right to compel attendance at the school. Rebok's



strategy had backfired, since the court's decision was based on the fact that the state of Iowa no longer had jurisdiction. Iowa had relinquished authority in 1896 at Rebok's prodding. Since the state had no power, the guardianships made by a state court were void.

Several more suits were brought by the conservative faction of the tribe with the assistance of Attorney Lamb. Even the pretender to the chieftainship attempted to have his place restored by the court, unsuccessfully, however. The upshot of all this was that the Mesquakie children fled the Toledo school, leaving Rebok and his cohorts with a building, but no pupils.

Following his interview with Push-e-to-ne-qua, Ward also contacted the dissident faction and held a long conference with about a dozen of the conservatives at the wikiup of Ta-ta-pa-sha, Push-e-to-ne-qua's rival. Ward asked those present to recall for him the history of the tribe's return to Iowa. He recorded their remembrances and listed the groups which were living in Iowa when the main body of the tribe came back. He also found that some of the rival faction based their claim to power on the original purchase of land.

Several speakers pointed out that it was the old chief, Ma-mi-nwa-ni-kwa, who had instigated the purchase of the Settlement land. Therefore, they reasoned, the heirs of the old chief should still control the land and the tribe. As one put it: "Ma-mi-nwa-ni-kwa bought this land. He was the head, the main Chief. This is the reason why Ma-mi-nwa-ni-kwa's grandson is now the controller of this land. Ta-ta-pa-sha is the Chief or controller. That is all there is to it. That is the fact."

This division of the tribe was a prominent part of Mesquakie political life, and it was typical of the history of the tribe. There had always been disputation among the Mesquakies. Earlier splits had been pro- or anti-French, pro- or anti-American, pro- or anti-British, pro- or anti-Black Hawk.

When compared with most other American Indian tribes, the Mesquakies were all conservatives, even the more white-oriented Indians such as Push-e-to-ne-qua. Despite their internal bickerings, the tribe kept the Indian way. The Mesquakies were able to do so because of their tribal land. The possession of a home, which they had purchased, gave the Mesquakie people a concrete symbol of pride and security. This firm hold on their identity allowed the tribe to resist the influences of white culture to a degree unusual among American tribes at the time. Even though many of their white neighbors deplored their "savagism," there was a grudging respect for the Mesquakies. Attachment to the land was something that white Iowans not only understood, but valued highly.

Relationships with white farmers were generally cordial. The Mesquakies were not too interested in farming themselves, for the most part limiting their production to truck gardening. Mesquakie men did, however, hire out to white farmers. For example, a Mesquakie assisted W. B. Cooper during the summer of 1905 as a hay hand. On occasion, there was conflict with white farmers, especially when the packs of Mesquakie dogs bothered local livestock.

Ward found that the economic status of the tribe was relatively stable. The men of the tribe were beginning to find occasional work in the white economy, and the women continued the routine of domestic tasks which had occupied their mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

Even though the U.S. Government had made prolonged efforts to turn the tribe to farming, the statistics for land cultivation show that the Settlement was primarily a home and not an exploitable resource in the eyes of the Indians. Only 560 acres of land were planted in crops such as field corn or wheat. About two-fifths of the total were in oats, which probably went as feed for the 315 horses and ponies of the Settlement. There were, however, over fifty acres of gardens. Indian corn, beans, squash, and potatoes, the vegetables which had been staples of the Mesquakie summer-time diet for generations, were grown under the care of the women. The Mesquakies also raised cattle, swine, and chickens.

There was an adequate supply of farm wagons and buggies on the Settlement and all the necessary equipment to handle farming. There was one cooking stove or heater for every ten people on the Settlement, and nearly the same ratio of sewing machines. Ward also noted the lone telephone and single typewriter.

For the most part, the tribe in 1905 was able to operate at a low level of cash income. The land still supplied most needs. Of course, the big game which had once supplied meat was scarce. Small game such as rabbit and squirrel supplemented the domestic cattle and chickens. In years to come the Mesquakies would be forced to buy more and more of their food supply, but as late as Ward's visit they were relatively self-sufficient.

Housing on the Settlement in 1905 was still predominantly the traditional wikiup. Ward counted sixty-five of the bark- or rush-covered structures and estimated about six people to each home. The most "primitive" houses were built on a framework of saplings which were sunk butt-first into the ground and then bent to form an oval structure. About half of



ME-SKWA-KI SUMMER SHADE

these were covered with bark, the rest constructed of rush matting. Usually from twelve to twenty-five feet in width, the wikiups could be as long as forty feet or as short as fifteen.

The traditional wikiup appeared crude to Ward, but it was a time-tested and practical form of shelter. All of the materials for such a home were readily available from the natural vegetation of the river bottom. The rush-covered wikiups in particular afforded a snug winter home. The rushes held natural air pockets which provided insulation from the severe Iowa winters, especially if overlapped in several layers. A small hole was provided at the center of the roof for ventilation of smoke from the central cooking and heating fire. In cold weather, dirt was thrown up around the base of the wikiup to seal it from drafts. Low platforms around the

Above:The Mesquakie built open-air shelters called "summer shades" and lay cut boughs over the top, to provide relief from the hot Iowa summer. The summer shade was a family gathering place—a place for cooking and eating, for beadwork and other hand work. **Below:** A wikiup "skeleton," before it's covered with mats made of cattails and rushes. The dome design made the wikiup stable enough to withstand heavy snow and wind.



walls provided sleeping and storage areas. Some Mesquakies altered the design to a wikiup with board sides and rush-matting gable roofs.

In addition to the traditional wikiups, there were about fifteen clapboard frame houses. These were small, generally two or three rooms, and had shingled roofs. The frame houses only recently had been introduced to the Settlement, the first being built by a Pottawattomi who had married into the Mesquakie tribe.

In the summer, additional frame structures were built adjacent to the wikiups which were covered with cut brush and boughs. These summer shades provided relief from the sun and were a place of work and leisure, especially for the women of the tribe.

Until a few years before Ward's investigation, the homes of the Mesquakies were grouped in village fashion according to time-honored custom. However, the small-pox epidemic which swept the Settlement in 1901 altered this plan. Medical authorities quarantined the Settlement for six months and burned all the dwellings and clothes. For protection from a recurrence of disease, the homes were rebuilt in a scattered fashion. Most were strung out along the floodplain of the Iowa River or tucked under the protecting bluff line. The contours of the land and the heavy timber provided natural protection from the elements.

During his visit, Ward learned little about the tribal religion, which seems strange for a man of his theological and philosophical interests. The Mesquakies were reluctant to discuss the details of religion, generally regarding such matters as private. The tribe practiced a religion which was uniquely Mesquakie, but shared basic beliefs with other tribes. Religion was not a formal undertaking, rituals and ceremonies being important, but not frequent. Religion pervaded the daily life of a Mesquakie. As one white historian put it: "If St. Paul could visit the Mesquakies in their Iowa home, he would probably observe that in all things they are too religious."

Both the social and religious organization of the tribe revolved around the clan system. Each member of the tribe became at birth a member of a particular clan. The clan was a social and political unit, but also was responsible for certain religious ceremonies and traditions. When a clan member died, another person was adopted into the clan within a year, which resulted in social and kinship patterns which were confusing to whites.

Missionaries had been singularly unsuccessful at Christianizing the tribe. The first attempts were by the

French in the seventeenth century. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, several church groups had tried to convert the Indians of the Settlement, but with little success. The conservatism of the tribe and attachment to the traditions of Mesquakie culture formed a barrier to missionary efforts.

The Presbyterians were the most persistent group to attempt the Christianization of the Mesquakies. As of 1905 they had a permanent mission on the Settlement staffed by two women, the Misses Campbell and Taylor. During the summer, Miss Campbell's nieces from Pennsylvania visited the Settlement on what must have been an interesting vacation. The two missionaries could boast of little "progress" in winning converts. The following year, the United Presbyterian Board of Iowa sent a full-time, ordained missionary and built new quarters for the church; results, however, were the same.

The Presbyterian ladies faced competition in July of 1905 from a group of visiting Winnebagos. A local Toledo paper called the visitors "revivalists." The Winnebagos brought with them ceremonies, dances, and songs which were probably part of a pan-Indian religious movement. They were joined by Chippewas and Kansas Pottawattomis. The Mesquakies were similar in culture to these tribes and there had been extensive inter-marriage among them.

The mid-summer festivities coincided with a traditional religious festival of the Mesquakies. When the early-maturing Indian corn came to harvest, the tribe held a several-day observance which was basically religious, but had some of the trappings of a holiday. In earlier years, this festival had marked the end of the summer growing season and the time when the village broke up for the winter hunt. By 1905, the festival had begun to attract the interest of local whites, since the native dancing and singing offered attractions of color and sound.

Chief Push-e-to-ne-qua, quick to see the potential of the festival as a source of cash income for the tribe, established a policy of charging interested whites a small admission fee. In 1905, the white visitors paid 10¢ each to witness the dancing and singing. Young people from the surrounding towns attended the dancing in excursion groups. The presence of the visiting tribesmen must have added a fillip of inspiration in 1905. The *Tama Herald* reported old-timers agreed "the dances of the past week have surpassed anything they had ever seen before." The mid-summer festival continued through the years and was formally organized in the 1920s as the now well-known Pow-Wow.

In general, the social contacts of the Mesquakies with the local white communities were friendly. This



Presbyterian missionaries, Misses Campbell and Taylor (in chairs), rest with guests at their home on the Mesquakie Settlement.

was especially true of the smaller Tama County towns such as Montour or Townsend. There was some antipathy towards the tribe in the larger cities of Tama and Toledo—although there was friendship as well.

The smaller and perhaps more informal communities welcomed the presence of the Indians. Just prior to Ward's arrival, the town of Montour included the Settlement people in their Fourth of July celebration. The traditional parade was followed by baseball between the Mesquakie team and the men of Ferguson. The Mesquakies were adept at many white sports, including the national pastime. It is recorded that on that day the Indians prevailed over the Ferguson team by the score of sixteen to ten. The festivities also included racing. Mesquakies took the honors in the fat man's gallop and the sack race, and Jim Bear placed second in the hundred yard dash.

The course of events in the summer of 1905 ran smoothly, an almost dull interlude compared to earlier years when the excitement of the school controversy or the small-pox epidemic had claimed attention. Young Bear, the chief's son, found a pearl in the mussel beds of the Iowa River; a child drowned while playing on the riverbank; the annual government payments were made, giving each Mesquakie \$24.36 for the year. Perhaps the most interesting event occurred when a band of Sioux traveling with a Wild West Show was housed and fed on the Settlement. As the summer began to fade

into autumn, Ward prepared to conclude his visit and compile his observations.

The results of Ward's stay were impressive. He not only met with many individual Mesquakies but also collected and compiled extensive information. One of the results was the systematic table of land purchases which was compiled from the county records. Using the table, Ward had Leroy Elliott draw a map of "Meskwakia," Ward's term for the Settlement. It was probably the first such map.

Working with the tribal council, Chief Push-e-to-nequa, Agent Malin, the Presbyterian missionaries, and many Mesquakie heads-of-household, Ward put together a complete census of the tribe. This list showed every member as of the summer of 1905, their birthdates, family relationships, and in some cases biographical information. While the list may have smoothed over many of the nuances of Mesquakie kinship, it was a major achievement.

Ward also enlisted the help of several of his University of Iowa colleagues, notably George T. Flom, a trained linguist and Professor of Scandinavian Languages at the University of Iowa. Flom joined Ward for a few days during the summer and accompanied him during two subsequent fall visits. Together they drew up notes on the Mesquakie language and compiled a

word list. The Mesquakies had long been able to write their language in a system of notation which probably had been learned from the French. The writing was a form of verbal transcription which recorded the sounds of the spoken tongue, and changed as rapidly as did the spoken language.

In order to preserve history from the Indian point of view, Ward requested the secretary of the tribal council, Cha-ka-ta-ko-si, or C. H. Chuck as he was known to whites, to write a manuscript history of the tribe. The result was a twenty-seven page document written in the Mesquakie syllabary. After their return to Iowa City, Ward and Flom published the manuscript. Unfortunately, they neglected to have it translated. Although the manuscript is still in the collection of the State Historical Society, it is now virtually impossible to translate. The spoken language has changed so much in the past sixty-nine years that few present-day members of the tribe can decipher Cha-ka-ta-ko-si's meaning. Those who have examined the document believe that the tribal secretary did not take the assignment too seriously. There is even a suggestion that he was pulling Ward's leg.

On a more tangible level, Ward collected several artifacts. [See photos.] A model wikiup, a child's bow and arrow set, a wooden ladle, and antler utensils were packed up and removed to the State Historical Society of Iowa, where they still remain. The most striking result of the visit was a collection of photographs of the Settlement and the tribe which Ward commissioned or in some cases borrowed.

In the fall of the year, Ward and several others made two follow-up trips to the Settlement. In November, he presented his official report to the Curators of the Historical Society and prepared to close the books on the investiga-



tion. The Society sponsored, in conjunction with the Anthropological Association, a two-day program of lectures and presentations on the Mesquakies in February 1906. Ward lectured on the tribe and illustrated his talk with lantern slides. Both Benjamin Shambaugh and Professor Flom contributed papers. The final day was highlighted by the presence of several members of the tribe who answered questions.

Ward was soon to leave Iowa, moving in 1906 to Colorado where he took up a new position as minister of the Unity Church in Ft. Collins. He also became Instructor of Physics at the State Agricultural College. Eventually, he settled in Denver where he concentrated his efforts on writing and publishing. He founded his own company, the Up the Divide Publishing Company, and continued to write on philosophical topics into the 1920s.

As for the Mesquakies, they continued to live quietly on their land. They belied the widely expressed opinion that American Indians would either become like





MESKWAKI LACROSSE STICK
70 YEARS OLD IN 1905
USED BY CHIKIHA'S (JENNIE
DAVENPORT) GRANDFATHER.
OBTAINED BY DUREN J.H. WARD
FOR
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

white men or become extinct. As the twentieth century moved on, they continued to battle with the Federal Government over annuities and education. As Iowa's economy matured, more and more Mesquakies began to work in factories or related industrial enterprises. The political disputes of the tribe did not die with old chief Push-e-to-ne-qua in 1919, but continue to be issues of concern. The tribe grew in numbers, and although some have moved to cities, the majority of the Mesquakies

still live on the Settlement. Despite the changes since the visit of Duren Ward in 1905, the Mesquakies remain an enclave of authentic Indian culture, a proud people. ❖

A selection of Mesquakie portraits begins on the next page.

This article first appeared in the March/April 1974 Palimpsest, with a different selection of images. Its author, L. Edward Purcell, was also the magazine's editor from 1973 through 1977.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Unfortunately, there is no one, comprehensive, published account of Mesquakie history. William T. Hagen, *The Sac and Fox Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1958) is concerned mostly with the Sac. There are several specialized articles which have been published in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* and the *Annals of Iowa* (third series), many of which have been helpful, most notably: Ruth Gallaher, "Indian Agents in Iowa," *IJHP*, 14 (1916), 359-97, and Edgar Harlan, "An Original Study of Mesquakie (Fox) Life," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 19 (1933-35), 115-25, 221-34, 352-62; 20 (1935-37), 123-39, 510-26. The most useful brief anthropological account is Nancy F. Joffe, "The Fox of Iowa," in Ralph Linton, ed., *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* (NY: D. Appleton-Century, 1940), 249-331. I have drawn heavily on unpublished material, primarily the Duren Ward Mesquakie Manuscripts of the State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City). Also useful were the Archives of the Governor's Office—Miscellaneous Correspondence (Indian Affairs), held by the State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines). The Governors' correspondence throws much light on the history of the tribe from the 1840s until the early twentieth century. The A. B. Cummins Papers (also at SHSI-Des Moines) were also consulted. Much of the specific material on the summer of 1905 was drawn from several Tama County newspapers, amplified by the recollections of some Mesquakie tribal members, notably Harvey Lasley. J. R. Caldwell, *A History of Tama County, Iowa*, Vol. I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1910) gives much information on the school controversy from the perspective of one of the participants, as does Horace M. Rebok's *The Last of the Mus-qua-kies and the Indian Congress* (Dayton, Ohio: Funk Publishers, 1900) and Rebok, et al., *History of the Indian Rights Association of Iowa and the Founding of the Indian Training School* (Toledo, Iowa; circa 1900). The Archives of the University of Iowa were also helpful in supplying correspondence between Ward and President MacLean.



MESKWAKI BEAD BELT.
MADE BY CHIKIKA
[WIFE OF WHITE BREAST]
OBTAINED BY DUREN J.H. WARD
FOR
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1905

The Ward-Mesquakie Photograph Collection



Above: Sha-wa-na-kwa-ha-ka (Jim Morgan). The beadwork medallions on the long strip attached to his headband were made by Mesquakie women.

Opposite: Ha-na-wo-wa-ta (James Onawat) was born in 1837, and his grandson, Po-kwi-ma-wa, in 1888. Their clothing reveals more of Mesquakie women's skills in beadwork—on moccasins, garters, sashes, and belts, in the tribe's traditional geometric and stylized floral designs.

There are over one hundred photographs of the Mesquakie people and the Settlement in the collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City). They were obtained by Duren Ward during his 1905 visit. Ward commissioned J. S. Moore, a well-known Toledo, Iowa photographer, to take portraits of several of the tribal leaders on August 14, 1905. Ward also borrowed a number of photographs from Ha-she-ta-na-kwa-twa (George Morgan), who had been tribal secretary for eighteen years prior to Ward's visit. Other photographs were borrowed from John W. Lamb, the successful Tama attorney who had argued the Mesquakie school case in Federal court. In addition, it is likely that Ward and his assistant, Leroy Elliott, themselves took pictures on the Settlement. Oddly, none of the members of the Historical Society expedition appears in the photographs. When Ward returned to Iowa City in the fall of 1905, he submitted his report to the Society's Board of Curators and asked that the photographs be preserved. The Board approved funds for this purpose. In order to illustrate the lectures he planned to give on the tribe, Ward had Lucy M. Cavanaugh of Iowa City make one hundred lantern slides from the photographs.

In addition to the slides, the Society turned the negatives of the Moore portraits over to T. W. Townsend, a local photographer, for printing. Townsend printed 11 x 14 inch, mounted versions of the portraits, which were preserved in a large album in the collection of the Society. When the lantern slides were uncovered in 1973, the portraits in the album were correlated with the slides. It was evident that the slides had been made from the original portraits. Other prints were discovered in the photographic files of the Society which corresponded to the remainder of the slides. Several pictures which were never copied as slides were also discovered. Thus the Ward collection is made up of several kinds of photographic processes: small paper prints, large portraits, and glass slides. Following are a few examples of the Collection.

—L. Edward Purcell







Ma-ka-ta-wa-kwa-twa (Black Cloud) wears an otter skin around his neck and tubular shell necklaces. Held in place with a beaded headband, the traditional roach is made of fur from a deer's tail, dyed red with vermillion.

Opposite: Mesquakie mothers routinely used cradleboards (te-ki-na-ka-ni) to keep their babies nearby while they tended to other duties. The cradleboard could be suspended aboveground on a pole or wall, keeping the infant safe from nuisances and animals. It was open to ventilation and breezes, was adjustable as the baby grew, and provided a good vantage point for the child to observe life as it happened around the village (instead of seeing only the ceiling or sky if the child was lying on its back). The bent-wood projection served as a handle; it also deflected falling objects and protected the head in case of a drop. Functioning like a mobile to amuse the child, small items tied to the projection dangled in front of the child's face. The gently swaying items, kept in motion by the baby's breathing, also kept flying insects away. Being bound in this snug fashion gave the child a sense of security.



Ko-ta-to, born in 1890. She is adorned with many necklaces and with ribbonwork applied down the front of her blouse. The traditional yoke-style blouse, like the shirt in the opposite photograph, was made from bolts of cotton purchased by the Mesquakies.

Opposite: Mu-kwa-pu-shi-to (Old Bear) was the younger brother of the last hereditary chief of the Mesquakies. In 1882 his claim to the chieftainship was passed over by the tribal council in favor of Push-e-to-ne-qua. The ceremonial bearclaw necklace he wears symbolized honor and prestige.



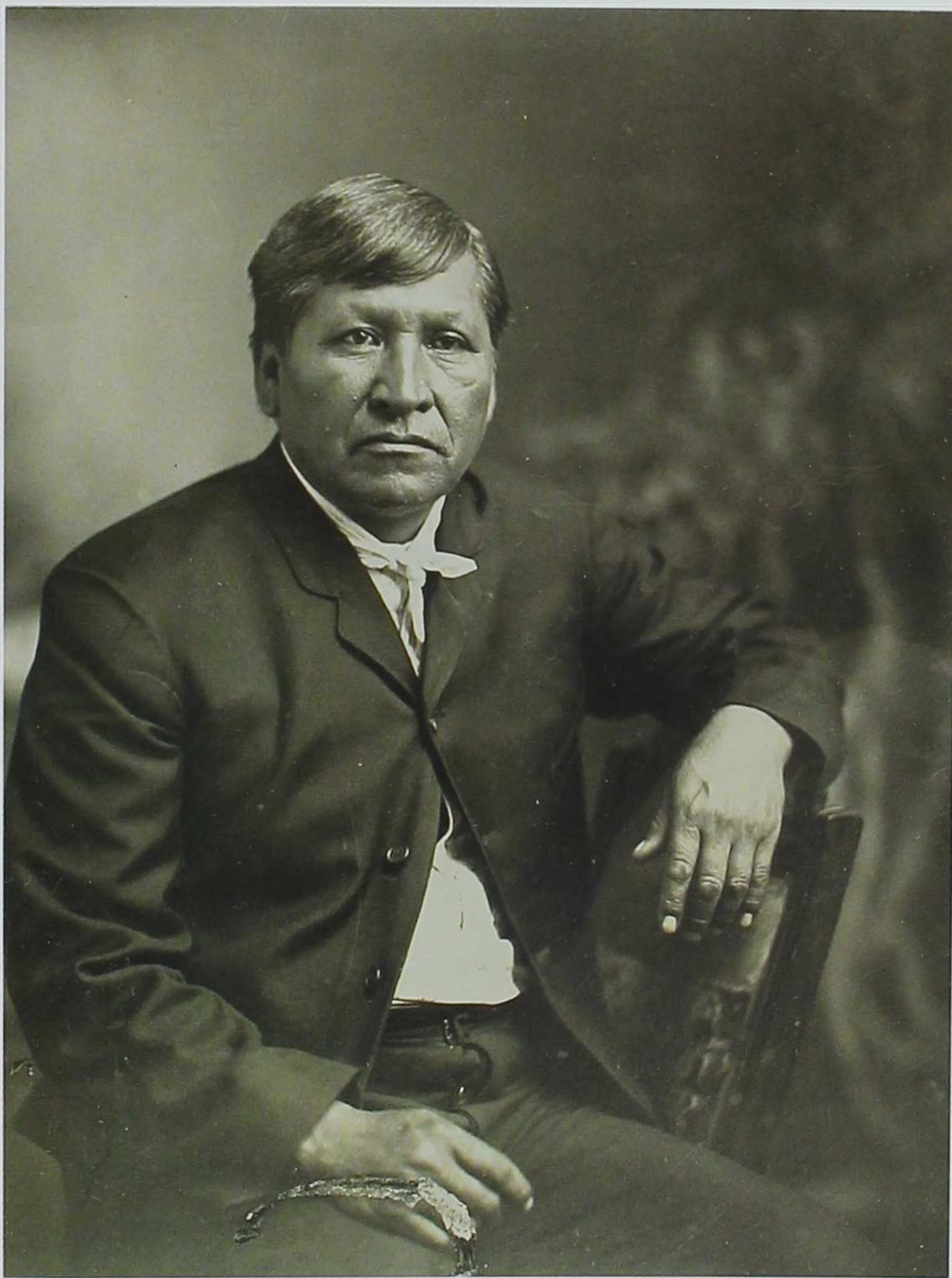




This photograph of Li-li-ya-pu-ka-chi and child was taken before Ward's 1905 visit. When she was sixteen, she fled the Toledo Indian Training School and became the focus of a court battle over compulsory attendance. The blanket she wears was probably made in the Amanas; the Mesquakies often traded with the communal society.

Opposite: Me-skwa-pu-swa (Joseph Tesson) was part Ioway and part French. Born in 1841, he served with the U.S. Army during the Civil War, and lived in Kansas, Nebraska, and New Mexico. He was the official government interpreter for the Mesquakie and a member of the tribal council. He dressed in full Mesquakie regalia for this formal studio portrait taken August 14, 1905. The photographer placed a pipe, spoon, beadwork, furs, and other items at his feet to add to the ambiance.





Kwi-ya-ma, photographed on two different occasions. Born in 1833, he was a warrior who had fought the Comanches in Kansas in the 1840s and 1850s. His medallion was probably made of "German silver," an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel. The woolen yarn sashes woven by Mesquakie women were worn by men as belts or turbans (as he wears them) or over the shoulder.





Left: Na-sa-pi-pya-ta (John Allen) was born near Iowa City in 1839. He returned to Iowa from Kansas in 1862, where he had been a warrior against the Comanches. He was brother-in-law of Push-e-to-ne-qua and a member of the tribal council. The blanket is probably from the Amanas. He holds the traditional Mesquakie eagle feather fan. At the time of Ward's visit, he was one of the last living Mesquakie warriors; most had died in the recent small-pox epidemic.

Opposite: Mesquakie youths wear European-American clothes in this studio portrait, yet three have feathers in their hats, and one has traditional Mesquakie ribbon work sewn down the front of his shirt (left, seated). From left, back row: Ma-ta-kwi-pa-ka-ta, Ka-ke-no-se (Earl D. Morgan), unidentified. Front row: Ki-wa-to-sa-ta, Ni-ka-na-kwa-ha-ka (Joe Tesson, Jr.), and Ki-ya-kwa-ka (John Young Bear).

Documenting the history of the Meskwaki did not end with the work of Duren Ward in 1905. The State Historical Society of Iowa has continued to record and preserve the history of the Meskwaki, the only American Indian tribe still residing in Iowa in large numbers. "The Society has one of the richest and most distinctive collections of materials on the Meskwaki nation in the world," says Mary Bennett, special collections coordinator. "Unfortunately some members of the tribe are unaware of the resources available and seldom get to examine this evidence of their own cultural history."

Partnering with Johnathan Buffalo and Dawn Suzanne Wanatee of the Meskwaki nation, Bennett, Charles Scott, and other Society staff have produced an interactive CD-ROM on the tribe's history. Of special interest to educators, the CD (right) features photographs and film clips, artifacts, audio recordings of the Meskwaki language, lesson plans, maps, primary documents, and cultural and historical information. Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment

for the Humanities helped fund the CD-ROM.

The public and educators will be able to access the *Meskwaki History* CD through an interactive kiosk in the State Historical Building in Des Moines (600 E. Locust) or by purchasing the CD. Contact Mary Bennett at 319-335-3916 for details.

Also of interest to educators, a traveling resource box, developed by Lynn Alex of the Office of the State Archaeologist, provides hands-on learning about Meskwaki history through artifact facsimiles, videos, books, and lesson plans. Grants from Humanities Iowa and the Fred Maytag Family Foundation helped fund the project box. To borrow the *Time Capsules from the Past* resource box, contact Lynn Alex, 319-384-0561.

—The Editor

