

The Early History of Iowa (pt. 4)

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THE EARLY HISTORY OF IOWA.

BY CHARLES NEGUS.

(Continued from page 12.)

Thus far the discovery and history of the territory of Iowa, with incidental circumstances, have been noted.

It may now be proper to inquire, as far as the records of the country will permit, into the history of those who have inhabited those beautiful prairies.

At the time of the acquiring by the United States of the country west of the Mississippi river, most of the territory now embraced within the limits of Iowa was in the possession of the Sac and Fox Indians, who at one time had been a powerful nation, and were in the possession of a large tract of country. Those Indians were formerly two distinct nations, and resided on the waters of the St. Lawrence.

But for many years before they left Iowa, they lived together, and were considered one people (though they kept up some customs among themselves, calculated to maintain a separate name and language.)

The Foxes first moved to the west, and settled in the vicinity of Green Bay, on Lake Michigan. But they had become involved in wars with the French, and neighboring tribes, and were so much reduced in numbers that they were unable to sustain themselves against their hostile neighbors.

The Sacs had been engaged in a war with the Iroquois (or Six Nations), who occupied the country which now composes the State of New York, and had become so weak that they were forced to leave their old hunting grounds and move to the west. They found the Foxes, their old neighbors, like themselves, reduced in numbers by the misfortunes of war, and from a matter of necessity as well as sympathy, they united their fortunes together, and became as one people; and as such remained so long as they lived within the limits of Iowa, and probably will so long as they remain a nation. The date of their emigration from the St. Lawrence is not definitely known. Father Hennepin speaks of the Fox Indians being

at Green Bay in 1680, which at that time was called the Bay of Puants.

After the union of the Sacs and Foxes at Green Bay, and when their nation had become powerful, they crossed over and extended their hunting grounds west to the Mississippi, and uniting with other tribes, began to act on the offensive.

All the valley from Rock river to the Ohio, on the east of the Mississippi, and on the west up to the Des Moines river, was inhabited by a numerous and warlike nation of Indians called the Minneways, signifying "men." This great nation was divided into different bands, known by various names, (such as the Illinois, Cahokins, Kaskaskius, Peorias, &c.,) and occupied separate parts of the valley. This nation had long been prosperous, and powerful, and feared and dreaded by other nations; but a circumstance happened which brought the vengeance of their neighbors upon them, and they in their turn were humbled.

Pontiac, a Sac chief, very much beloved and respected by his people, had been wantonly murdered by some of the Minneways. This act aroused the anger of the Sac and Fox nations, and, forming an alliance with other tribes, they commenced a fierce and bloody war against the different bands of the Minneways. This war was continued till that great nation was nearly destroyed, and their hunting grounds possessed by their enemies.

At the time the United States made the Louisiana purchase, the Sac and Fox nations were in possession of most of the State of Illinois, and nearly all the country west of the Mississippi, between the upper Iowa river and the Jeffreon (in Missouri,) west to the Missouri river. The Sacs had four large villages where most of them resided, one at the head of the Des Moines rapids, near where Montrose is now located, which consisted of thirteen lodges; the second village was on the east shore of the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Henderson river, about half way between Burlington and Oquawkee. The third village was located on Rock river, about three miles from the Mississippi, which was their largest

and principal village. The other was on the west side of the river, near the mouth of the upper Iowa.

The Foxes (or Reynards) had three villages, one on the west side of the Mississippi, six miles above the rapids of Rock river; the second, "twelve miles in the rear of the lead mines at Du Buque," and the other on Turkey river.

The Iowas, who may be regarded as a band of the Sacs and Foxes, at this time had one village near the mouth of the lower Iowa river, and another on the north side of the Des Moines, near where is now located the town of Iowaville. These Indians had their separate villages and different chiefs, but they occupied in common the same hunting grounds, were united in their wars and alliances, and the Sacs, Foxes and Iowas were generally regarded as one nation. It appears that the Iowas at one time were identified with the Sacs, who lived on Rock river; but from some cause, at a period not definitely known, there were eight families who left that village, and started out as a band by themselves, and for a long time "they recognized eight leading families" in their band. "These clans bear the title or name of the particular animal or bird from which they are supposed to have sprung." And they were known as the Eagle, the Pigeon, the Wolf, the Bear, the Elk, the Beaver, the Buffalo, and the Snake families. "These families were known severally in the tribe by the peculiar manner in which they cut their hair. The Eagle family was marked by two locks of hair on the front part of the head, and one on the back left part. The Wolf family had scattered bunches of hair left representing islands, whence their families were supposed to have sprung. The Bear family left one side of the hair of the head to grow much longer than the other. The Buffalo family left a strip of hair long from the front to the rear part of the head, with two bunches on each side to represent horns." The other families, with their peculiar bodies, were lost or had become extinct long before they left Iowa.

In 1730, and for many years after, the Iowas were estimated at about 1,100 souls; but in 1848 they were stated to be a

fraction under 750; and in 1852 the Sacs only numbered about 1,300, and the Foxes about 700, which indicates that this once powerful nation will soon become extinct. When the Iowas left their village on the Des Moines, they "ascended the Missouri river to a point of land formed by a small stream on its east shore, called by the Indians Fish Creek, which flows in from the direction of, and not far from the celebrated Red Pipe Stone quarry, many hundred miles from their former village. The nation composed of the Sacs, Foxes and Iowas, and particularly those about Rock River, raised large quantities of corn, beans and melons; more than they wanted for their own use, and frequently sold large quantities to the traders, and probably cultivated the soil to a greater extent than any other Indians in the West. At this time, besides the Indian population, many portions of Iowa had been traversed by the French, who had penetrated the wilderness either in the pursuit of mineral, or to carry on a trade with the Indians. The history of these operations is obscure, and but little known. They must have carried on quite an extensive business in the valley of the Des Moines; for Gen. Pike, on his Map of the Mississippi Valley, published with the report of his tour up the river in 1805, lays down four forts on the Des Moines river; Fort Crawford, on the south side, a short distance below, where the town of Portland has been laid out; Fort Gelaspy, nearly opposite to Iowaville; Fort St. Thomas, very near if not on the very spot where the town of Chillicothe is now located, and another fort a short distance below, on the north side of the river; and there were long after this country was settled by the whites, many indications to be seen of settlements having been made by other people than the Indians, along the banks of this beautiful river.

North of the hunting grounds of the Sacs and Foxes were the Sioux. In 1805, their possessions embraced a portion of the north and north-west part of Iowa, extending from the Mississippi to some distance south of the Missouri river, and north to the source of the St. Peters river; and they sometimes hunted on the east side of the Mississippi. The Sioux

were divided into several bands, and known by different names, each band having their own chief. There were the Minowa, Rangtons (or Gens de Lac,) who resided on the lower waters of the St. Peters, and this band was again divided into four subdivisions. The principal chief of this division was La Fienelle (or Wabasha,) who has already been noticed for his kindness to Gen. Pike. The second band were the Washpetongs (or Gens des Fienelles,) who inhabited the upper waters of the St. Peters, and their principal chief was Wasonquiani. The third band was the Sussitongs; and occupied the country on the Mississippi, above the Minowa Rangtons. This band was divided into two subdivisions, called the Cawrees, and the Sussitongs proper, and each had their separate chiefs. The fourth division was called the Yanctongs. They occupied the north-west portion of Iowa, and the country north of it. This band was divided into two grand divisions, the Yanctongs of the north and the Yanctongs of the south. The fifth division were the Titongs, who were dispersed on both sides of the Missouri. They were divided into two divisions, known as the north and south bands.

The Titongs and Yanctongs were never stationary. The immense plains over which they were constantly roving, rendered it impossible to point out their precise place of habitation. They had a large number of horses, on which they travelled, and if seen in a certain place one day, frequently in ten days after, they might be found five hundred miles from there. They moved with a rapidity hardly to be credited, and felt themselves equally at home in every place. These bands were reputed to be the most warlike and savage of all the Sioux. The sixth division were the Washpecoutes. Their hunting grounds were the head waters of the Des Moines, and they were considered the most stupid and inactive of any of the Sioux nations. The Sioux have long been noted as the most warlike and powerful nation of Indians within the limits of the United States, and have for the most of the time been at war with some other nation, though they have generally cultivated friendly feelings towards the whites.

The Santeurs (or Chippeways) occupied the head waters of the Mississippi, and the country north of the lakes; and like the Sioux, are divided into many bands, known by the names of the Crees, Nepesangs, Algonquins, Otowas, Muscononges, and Iroquois. This was a powerful nation, and had had many wars with the Sioux, and were at war with them when Pike visited that country. Though much less in number than the Sioux, yet owing to the swampy country which they occupied, protecting them from an attack on horseback, their enemies have never been able to subdue them.

The Minomene (or Fols Abions) nation resided in seven villages, and occupied the country south of the Santeurs. The Minomenes hunt on the same grounds with the Winnebagoes, and though a small nation, they were respected by all their neighbors for their brave and independent spirit, and by the whites for their friendship and kindness.

The Puants (or Winnebagoes) occupied the northern part of Illinois and the southern part of Wisconsin. They had seven large villages situated so near each other that their warriors could be assembled in a few days time. They were ferocious in their disposition, and noted for their treachery.

The Sacs and Foxes had a fierce war with their neighbors, the Winnebagoes, and after subduing them and taking possession of their lands, they established their principal village on the north side of Rock river, near its junction with the Mississippi. This village at one time contained upwards of sixty lodges, and was among the largest Indian villages on the continent. In 1825 the Secretary of War estimated the entire number of the Sacs and Foxes at 4,600 souls; and in 1826 their warriors were supposed to number between twelve and fourteen hundred. This village was situated in the immediate vicinity of the upper rapids of the Mississippi, where the beautiful and flourishing towns of Rock Island and Davenport are located. The beautiful scenery of the island, the extensive prairies dotted over with groves, the picturesque bluffs along the river banks, the rich and productive soil, producing large crops of corn, pumpkins and other vegetables,

with little labor, the abundance of wild fruit, game and fish, and almost everything calculated to make it a delightful spot for an Indian village, which was found there, had made this place a favorite resort for the Indians. And the whole nation had become so much attached to this location, that they yielded it to the white man with a great deal of reluctance; and their being required by Government to leave this cherished home, was the principal cause of the Black Hawk war.

By the treaty made with Gen. Harrison, at St. Louis, in 1804, the Sacs and Foxes conveyed to the United States their lands east of the Mississippi, and a large tract on the west, for which they received at the time two thousand two hundred and thirty four and one-half dollar in goods, and were to have a yearly annuity of one thousand dollars. The United States were bound by this treaty to never interrupt the Indians in the possession of land rightfully held by them, and also agreed to protect them in the quiet enjoyment of the same; and the Indians agreed to never sell their lands to any other party than the United States. The treaty provided that no private revenge or retaliations should be taken by either party; that should any individual be guilty of any misconduct, he was to be given up and punished in accordance with the laws of the country. And if any property was stolen from either party, by any individual, the other was to make indemnity for it. It was agreed that so long as the land ceded belonged to the United States, the Sacs and Foxes were to have the privilege of living and hunting upon them. And there were also several other stipulations made in reference to their mutual interests. This treaty never gave satisfaction to the Sacs and Foxes, and some of the chiefs afterwards decided that the five chiefs who met and held this treaty with Gen. Harrison at St. Louis, had no right to dispose of the lands belonging to the nation. The most prominent among those who were displeased with the provisions of the treaty were Black Hawk (or Muk-ka-ta-misha-ca-kaik.) Black Hawk was not by birth a chief; but, by his bold daring and warlike skill, made himself one of the principal chiefs in

the nation, and his intimate connections with the early history of Iowa, makes it a matter of interest to give a short notice of his biography.

(To be continued.)

INCIDENTS OF PRISON LIFE IN 1862.

BY E. M. VAN DUZEE.

LATE MAJOR TWELFTH IOWA INFANTRY.

[Continued from page 64.]

We arrived in Mobile, Ala., early Sabbath morning, April 13th, and were immediately transferred to the steamer "James Battle," lying at the wharf ready for our reception. We here passed under charge of a company of "home guards," commanded by a rich young sprig of the chivalry. Col. John Forsyth was at this time commander of the post of Mobile. He came on board the steamer and engaged in conversation with Gen. Prentiss and other officers. He claimed a victory for the rebels at "Shiloh," but our faith could not be shaken by anything short of the best evidence to the contrary, that the final victory and all its glorious results were for the Union.

As the steamer left the wharf and turned her prow up the river, the prisoners crowded her guards and hurricane deck, and cast longing glances down over the calm bosom of the blue bay that opened its arms towards the gulf. Our vision was too feeble to pierce the intervening distance, but we knew that just beyond the horizon lay the federal blockading squadron, manned by brave and vigilant friends, whose hearts beat in loyal unison with our own; that however hate, malice and cruelty might hedge us in and do their desire upon us, there was an outer circle of loyal breasts extending along our whole gulf and Atlantic coast, and stretching across mountain and valley, along the coast line of that surging sea of battle, whose red waves, advancing and receding, marked the tide boundaries of war,—a circle of strength that could not be broken, from whose circumference, sooner or later, conquering cohorts would go forth, closing upon its centre with inexorable cer-

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