

1974

# Education and the Mesquakie

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Education and the Mesquakie

by

MacBurnie Allinson

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	10
Foreword	10
Tribal History to 1804	12
The Language Barrier	16
Efforts of the Young United States with the Sac and Fox	18
The 1804 Treaty	20
Tribal History from 1804 to 1832	23
Events Prior to the Black Hawk War	31
The Black Hawk War	34
Land Cessions, Kansas, Eventual Return to Iowa	36
Famous Historical Names Associated with the Tribes	42
The Beginning and Growth of the Tama Settlement	43
A CENTURY OF "EDUCATION"	49
Early Efforts in Schooling at the Settlement	49
White Concern over Mesquakie Education at the Turn of the Century	58
The Background of the Boarding Schools	61
The Toledo Boarding School	64
Getting support for the school	68
Court cases	76
Maintaining the boarding school	81
Eventual close of the boarding school	84

	Page
Settlement Schools Following the Toledo Boarding School	86
The Sanatorium Day School	86
The Mesquakie Day School	88
The Fox Day School	90
The operation of the day schools	91
The Change from the Day Schools to the Sac and Fox Consolidated School	96
Changes Which Took Place over the Last Seventy Years	104
THE MESQUAKIE AND THE BOARDING SCHOOLS	109
Early Boarding School Problems	110
Athletics in Boarding Schools	115
The Determination of Who is "Indian"	117
Mesquakie and the Boarding Schools	121
THE MESQUAKIE AND THE SCIENTISTS	129
THE MESQUAKIE AND AGRICULTURAL ASSIMILATIVE EFFORTS	150
Efforts at Allotting Indian Land	165
TRADITIONAL EDUCATION OF THE MESQUAKIE	172
Remnants and Memories from the Hunting, Fishing, Trading, Trapping and Gardening Time	173
The Mesquakie and Indian Medicine	178
Mesquakie Society	186
Mesquakie Oral Literature	191
Conclusion of Traditional Education	194

	Page
EFFORTS TO CAPITALIZE ON BEING "INDIAN"	196
The Fox Band	197
Silversmithing or Jewelry-Making	198
Catering to Tourists	199
Tamacraft	202
The Pow Wow	206
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EFFORTS AMONG THE MESQUAKIE	213
Nineteenth Century Work	213
Twentieth Century Elements	218
Continued work of the Presbyterians	218
The Open Bible Mission	228
Other white church efforts	231
Mesquakie Reaction to White Church Efforts	232
Indian Religious Efforts with the Mesquakie	234
The Drum Society	235
The Native American Church (Peyote)	237
Religious Efforts--A Summation	239
SOCIAL EDUCATION AND THE MESQUAKIE	242
Poverty	242
Alcoholism	245
Uneasiness and Fear	248
POINT OF VIEW	252
A SUMMATION	261
BIBLIOGRAPHY	266
APPENDIX	275

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Dates in Mesquakie history to 1815	33
Table 2. Dates in Mesquakie history, 1815 to 1880	47



## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Locations of settlement Indian schools	3
Figure 2. Cessions following the Black Hawk War	37
Figure 3. Government agency building and first school (circa 1880)	50
Figure 4. Cornerstone of the Toledo Boarding School	77
Figure 5. Toledo Boarding School building	77
Figure 6. The Mesquakie Day School building	89
Figure 7. The Fox Day School building	89
Figure 8. The Sanatorium Day School building	102
Figure 9. The Sac and Fox Consolidated School from the site of the Fox Day School building	102
Figure 10. Barn of the Toledo Boarding School	170
Figure 11. The old stone house	201
Figure 12. The home of Tamacraft	201
Figure 13. First Presbyterian mission house	216
Figure 14. First Presbyterian Mission Church	229
Figure 15. Mesquakie United Presbyterian Church	229
Figure 16. Mural by Indian students at South Tama High School	262
Figure 17. Portion of the Upper Mississippi River Valley occupied (in part) by the Sac and Fox for two-hundred years	277

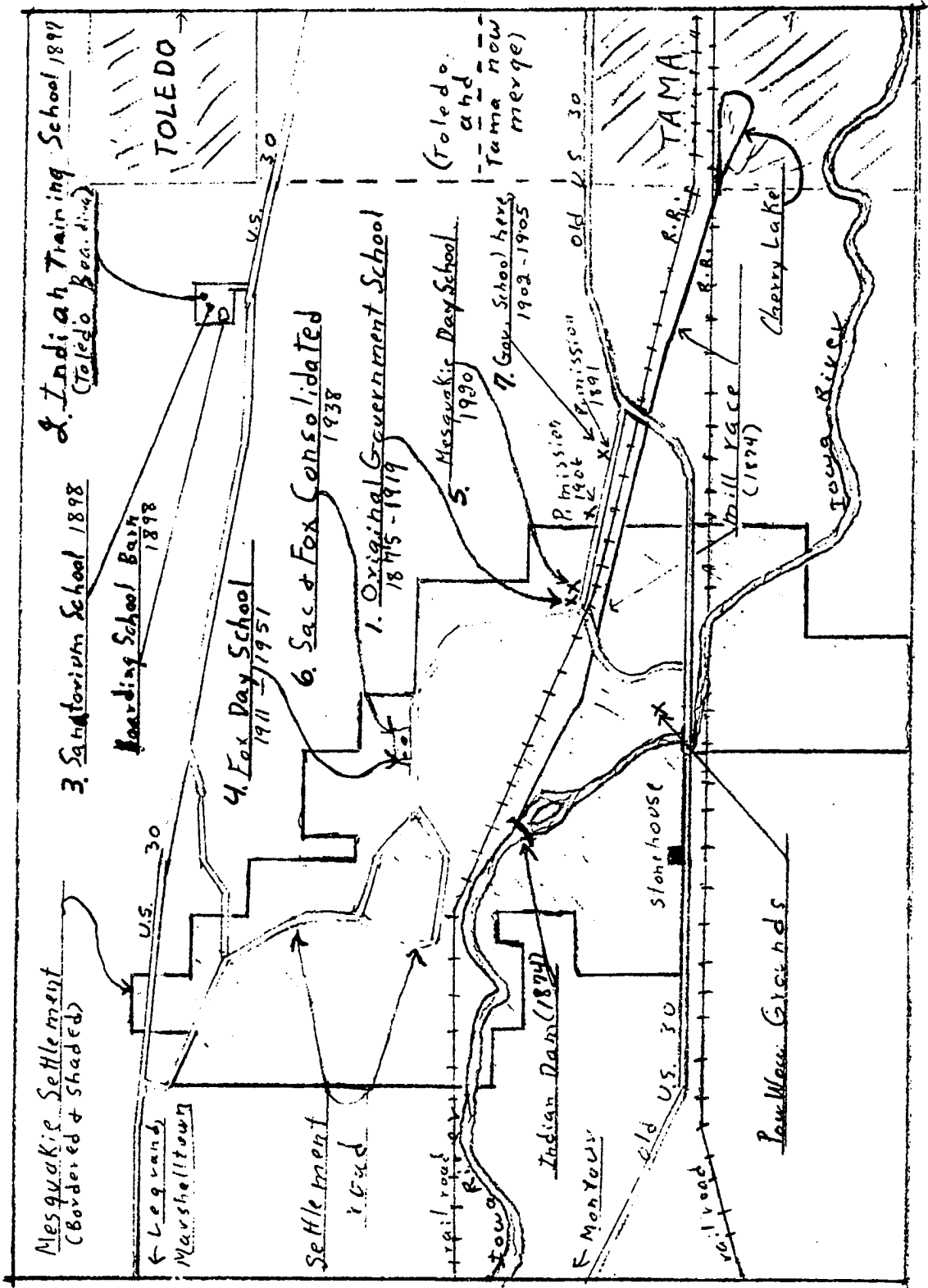
## INTRODUCTION

The American Indians have been a fascination to educated individuals from the beginnings of European settlement in the North American Continent. The loose federations of tribes (often called "nations") served, along with the Swiss republic and the Greek city states, as sources of ideas for the forming of the United States Constitution. While the numbers of American Indians lessened over the centuries and while their influence on the political and military decisions of the national government decreased, interest in Indian cultures and histories has remained high. The Mesquakie, centered on the settlement near Tama, were no exception. Over the last century scholarly interest in this tribe by Whites has been continuous. Work by trained personnel, including clergy, scholars, and philanthropists, has continued until the tribe has been "studied to death."

Despite the numbers of people who had studied the tribe, attempts to get a clear picture of what had gone on in Mesquakie education were frustrating. There had been a "Fox School" and a "Mesquakie School." A then-mysterious "Toledo Boarding School" emerged. A government school was being run on the settlement. This served most Mesquakie students through the first four grades of their scholastic careers. But questions such as "What happened?" and "How did all this

Figure 1. Locations of settlement Indian schools

1. Original Government School Building  
"School" was held here on a sporadic basis from 1876 to 1919. The Mesquakie Day School opened in this building in the fall of 1908 and continued there until the building was burned in 1919.
2. Toledo Boarding School  
This served at least some of the Mesquakie as a school from 1898 to 1911. It became a sanatorium in 1912 and is currently used as an apartment building.
3. Sanatorium School  
Originally a brick commissary building, it was used as a school for patients at the sanatorium from 1920 until 1942. Some Mesquakie attended here when they were patients. Currently it is a residence.
4. Fox Day School  
Built in 1911 to coincide with the closing of the boarding school, it was used as a day school until 1931 and used again as such in 1936-7. It burned in 1952.
5. Mesquakie Day School Building  
This replaced the destroyed Original Government School Building in 1920. Added to later, it had a final capacity of forty students. It was used as a day school until 1937, the time when the Sac and Fox Consolidated School opened. Currently it contains apartments for settlement families.
6. Sac and Fox Consolidated School Building  
Built in 1937-38, it has served as a school and community center since that time. It has been the location of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office since 1942.
7. The Original Presbyterian Mission House  
Built in 1891, it was the location of the government school from 1892-1895. Somewhat remodeled and in good repair, it is currently used as a residence.



come about?" were answered with such comments as "Nobody knows." Further investigation proved that many people, present and past, knew and had known a great deal about Mesquakie education. But the people who knew about it and had known about it were not those who had been educating Mesquakie students. A clear current description of what had taken place in Mesquakie education had not been recorded so that a curious individual could read it and understand at least the rudiments of the problems faced in efforts to work with Mesquakie students.

The writer decided that he would like simply to go and find what was there, to discover for himself what had taken place during educational efforts with the Mesquakie tribe. This had the immediate effect of bringing home his gross ignorance of the entire area of Indian education. Finding that many of his colleagues (including several who had worked with Indian students in the South Tama school system) knew less than he was not much consolation. But along with the manifest ignorance a thorough curiosity about Mesquakie education was found among students and colleagues which matched his own. In brief, it was determined that a study of Mesquakie education was needed.

The study should:

1. Furnish a clear picture of what happened in Mesquakie education, gather it into one readily comprehensible volume,

and create a ready source which teachers and others who wished to understand could consult.

2. Uncover matters of Indian culture which had been overlooked or ignored and which would give a more representative view of Mesquakie life than that which could be obtained from attendance at the annual Pow-wow at the Tama settlement.

3. Prove useful to the South Tama School District and to Marshalltown Community College. The South Tama District has Mesquakie students throughout its various attendance centers. Usually these students attend kindergarten in this system before attending the Sac and Fox Consolidated School on the settlement. All local Mesquakie grade and high school students attend the South Tama Schools after the fourth grade. The settlement is within the state-designated area which Marshalltown Community College serves. The college is only some sixteen miles from the settlement, but it has had few Mesquakie Indian students (perhaps eight in the last ten years).

4. Serve as a model for further investigations of other specific ethnic or geographic groups which in turn would assist colleges in their efforts to be of good service to their student bodies. While some of these investigations might well be mere "briefs," it is felt that an emphasis on the background of pupils and students is often in order.

While Indians in the United States furnish many of the best examples of misunderstood minorities, there are certainly others. Currently the Mexican-Americans in California are beginning to get a bit of society's largesse in this country, and they will be sending their children to colleges in increasing numbers. If the college syndrome begins to move throughout the world (and even Marshalltown Community College has some twenty foreign students in the fall of 1973) the use of such studies may well prove common within a few decades.

5. Assist in filling the need for objective studies of Indian history and problems that exist at this time. The recent bloodshed at Wounded Knee points up the need for a rational look at Indian problems rather than the publication of slanted materials such as those found in "The Warpath," which listed Indian leaders who were considered opposed to causes espoused by the Pan-Indian movement as "Uncle Tomahawks" (98b, p. 8).<sup>1</sup>

Originally it had been planned to hold interviews with large numbers of Mesquakie about their experiences in schools.

<sup>1</sup>References to "in hand" materials (such as books, letters, newspapers, and microfilms) are made through parenthetical inserts. The initial number of the insert refers one to the alphabetically numbered bibliography near the end of the study.

It was felt that thus a picture of what had taken place over the last century could be given a touch of reality and a dimension not to be found in such data as attendance figures and superintendents' reports. The naiveté of the writer has since lessened. It took but a few contacts to discover that one learned more, paradoxically, if one asked fewer questions, and that one made better progress if he moved slowly. It was not until four years had passed that the remark made at a Mesquakie council meeting was fully understood by the writer. "If you want to write about Indians you should be an Indian." For instance, if one were an Indian he would understand long periods of silence while a person being interviewed paid him the compliment of seriously considering his question before he began to answer it. Interviews with Mesquakie were held, but they were rarely set up by appointments, rather they simply "happened." The interviewer did not control the direction of the interview. The dignity and the culture of the Mesquakie dominated the procedure, though quietly.

Work with written sources provided an abundance of material. As the bibliography will indicate, the material directly relating to the Mesquakie (often found under "Fox") is considerable. The preservation of the original Mesquakie language and customs, to a far greater degree than that found in most other American Indian tribes, and their iso-



lation in the midst of Iowa has brought considerable attention to the tribe. Standard works such as the Meriam Report of 1928 and specialized works such as the History of the Carlisle Indian School by Brunhouse proved invaluable. Information provided by works such as these made trips to the present day boarding school at Flandreau, South Dakota, and to the emerging community college of Haskell in Lawrence, Kansas, more meaningful experiences. Correspondence with government agencies, churches, and individuals proved fruitful. While interviews have played a most significant role in this study, a major portion of the information presented herein has been garnered from written sources.

The plan followed in writing the study was that of presenting a background of the tribe first and then following a topical approach. There were practical reasons for this. First, the historical background was to be found in readily available sources, and early portions of this background could be written while other materials were being gathered. Second, to attempt an understanding of any aspect of the Mesquakie without considerable knowledge of tribal history proves a most difficult task. So the plan followed insured that in writing the topical portions of the study the writer had the benefit of the knowledge of tribal history gained from completion of the first portion of the work.

Some approach which would reveal the diverse character

of Indian education in general and of Mesquakie education in particular needed to be found. The topics were chosen in an attempt to make the many-faceted complexity of Indian education evident to the reader. It should be noted that, while a reader familiar with the tribe and with Indian education might well read these latter sections in part and at random, the thesis is written so that each unit presupposes knowledge of the preceding units. Thus it has been assumed that when the reader begins "Religious Education and the Mesquakie" he has read the five topical sections which precede it.

The illustrations and local map included in this study are meant to emphasize a significant feature of Mesquakie life. A majority of the members of this tribe live in close proximity to extant physical reminders of their history over the last century. Railroads, highways, millrace; Boarding School, Mesquakie School, Original Mission House--these and other mute monuments of Mesquakie history, Mesquakie tribal life, and Mesquakie education are still present. They are constant reminders of a recent past which includes much poverty, much unhappiness, and above all an incredible amount of misunderstanding. It is sincerely hoped that the material which follows will serve to remove a substantial portion of that misunderstanding for both the Mesquakie and their white neighbors.

## AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## Foreword

The first section of this thesis, An Historical Background, is placed at the beginning of this work as a convenient reference for material to come later.

There are some problems that arose during the reading for this section. One of them was the size of the Mesquakie tribe or nation. Most of the figures on Indian population are startling for most Whites who begin studying in this area. Though the writer was aware that the total number of Indians who lived within the borders of the present United States was probably not over a million at any one time, it was still surprising to find that the Mesquakie at no time appear to have numbered over 3,000 and that the combined tribes of the Sac (Osakie) and Fox (Mesquakie) appear never to have exceeded 9,000. Current figures are estimates, since just what constitutes a Mesquakie is undetermined even by "The People" themselves: Taking the tribal roll as a usable figure, there are less than 1,000 total Mesquakie at present.

Along with the relatively small size of the Mesquakie tribe came another matter, the language problem. Before 1900 few Mesquakie spoke English proficiently. In the 1920's George Youngbear acted as interpreter at official functions,

and in 1973 Mesquakie is still the language of the settlement, and as such is used: in official council meetings in part, in conversation among the residents, by the children at the day school when they are on the playground, and (according to the Documentary History of the Fox Project) learned by newcomers to the settlement in self-defense. English is the second language for most Mesquakie. In the past, Mesquakie history has been recorded in English and in French. What was understood by the speakers of Mesquakie (the Sacs, Iowas, and Kickapoos shared the language) is never a certainty in reference to treaties and agreements. Wherever a conversation between Indian and White has been recorded, the writer has assumed that it was through an interpreter, except where it was specifically stated otherwise. Considering the language barrier, it is easy to understand why the Indians and Whites had troubles; and one is surprised that they had as little difficulty as they did.

With the current Pan-Indian movement there is also a tendency to think of Indians in this country as being largely concerned with Indian welfare in general. During the last five decades this may have been true, but it certainly has not been so in the past. A "French" victory over the Fox was usually participated in by at least two other Indian tribes, and the last report of the Battle of Bad Axe the writer read failed to mention the Sioux waiting hopefully

on the western side of the Mississippi for any Sac and Fox fleeing across the river from the White forces. The Sioux wanted to take enemy scalps, and take them they did. After the defeat of Black Hawk's band, there was to be further fighting for the Sac and Fox; but it would be with other Indian tribes, not Whites.

In summary, some of the more important influences on Mesquakie history that appeared repeatedly in the research for this manuscript were these: the relatively small size of the Mesquakie nation, even in relation to other Indian tribes; the continual difficulties experienced from the lack of a common language with the Whites and with other Indian tribes (except the Kickapoo, Sac, and Iowa); and the lack of any particular sympathy from other Indian groups such as the Sioux, the Menominee, the Osage, and (in times more distant) the Illinois and the Peoria.

#### Tribal History to 1804

As with most of the Indian tribes, nations, and peoples of North America, the early history of the Mesquakie is buried in myth and obscurity. One version has it that the Mesquakie began when a woman came down from the Upper World in a great storm. She fell into the water<sup>1</sup> on her back and

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<sup>1</sup>Whether this is an inland body of water such as Lake Michigan, or something even more infinite like the Atlantic Ocean is not indicated.

an island came up under her. Two sons were born to her, Hot Hand and Cold Hand. They built a boat (having grown up in a few hours) and headed for the mainland. Their mother sank into the waves. From these two sons came the Mesquakie (70, pp. 1-15). Some of the miraculous happenings resemble teachings of the Christian church. Hot Hand, for instance, becomes suspiciously like St. Peter. To date the mythology offers few clues to the actual origin of the Mesquakie. Artifacts indicate that at one time they were on the St. Lawrence River<sup>1</sup>, but the arrival of the French found the Mesquakie (Fox) on the south shore of Lake Superior and the Osakie (Sac) in Upper Michigan. It is believed that from these areas are derived the names of Mesquakie, the Red Earth People, and Osakie, the Yellow Earth People. The banks on the lakes in the respective areas (that may have yielded clay for pottery) being red in the one instance and yellow in the other. From the time of the first French contact, events in Mesquakie history began to be recorded.

By 1656 the Mesquakie had been relieved of their holdings on the south shore of Lake Superior by the Chippewa and were located in the Fox River and Lake Winnebago region. The Sac, still largely separate from the Fox, had moved to the nearby Green Bay area (near the thumb of the Wisconsin mitten)

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<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

because of pressure from the Iroquois and the French. Estimates of the size of the Mesquakie tribe at this time were rather loose, but a working figure of 2,000 might be in order. The Fox seem to have lived in villages of varying size, and the pattern of life, featuring agriculture and hunting, had been established. With the arrival of Europeans, beginning with the French, fur trade developed rapidly, pottery-making disappeared by 1760, and "brass kettles were used almost exclusively" (81, p. 112).

While the Fox dealings with the French centered upon trade, there was repeated difficulty over the free passage of traders (69, p. 61; 91, p. 251).

The Fox lived at the little Butte des Morts on the w. [west] bank of Fox r. [River], about 37 m. [miles] above [upstream from] Green Bay. They made it a point, whenever a trader's boat approached, to place a torch upon the bank as a signal for the traders to come ashore and pay the customary tribute (48, p. 473).

Setting something of a pattern of conduct for the future, the Mesquakie split into pro- and anti-French groups in 1728 (38, p. 63). The battles between the Mesquakie and the French were marked by thorough cooperation with the French from other Indian tribes, including the Sac. After a series of defeats at the hands of the French and their Indian helpers from 1730 to 1734, the Mesquakie (or at least a sizeable group of them) took refuge at a Sac village, and then the French turned on both, driving them from the Green Bay area.

The Sac and Fox joined sides in their cause against tribes to the south and west, notably the Peoria and the Illinois, and settled in villages in the Upper Mississippi Valley from the general vicinity of Prairie du Chien (due notation being taken of the rodents or "prairie dogs" in the area) south to the mouth of the Des Moines River (38, p. 64; 47, p. 5).

While some of the reports of great numbers of Fox killed by the French appeared to have left the Fox a decimated tribe, either by converts from other tribes or natural population increase "the Fox had, by 1765, recovered their aboriginal numbers" of about 2,000 (38, pp. 63-64). Mesquakie villages were formed near Prairie du Chien and Dubuque, and the Osakie established the then famous village of Saukenuk near the present site of Rock Island in about 1755 (18, p. 22). From this time on the fortunes of the two tribes, the Sac and the Fox, were intermingled.

From the mid-eighteenth century until the beginning of the nineteenth, the Osakie and Mesquakie tribes continued the way of life characterized by hunting and agriculture and trade which they had followed in the area of Green Bay and the Fox River in Wisconsin. The waterways were the major means of transportation; but when their hunting area expanded to include the prairies of Iowa, the horse became more of a necessity. Warfare with other tribes, notably the Osage in Missouri and the Sioux in Iowa, was waged on a



pragmatic basis, with chiefs such as Black Hawk of the Sac inviting individual members of the tribes to accompany him on raids and responses to raids for glory and gain. Increased dependence on the trader continued. Kettles and powder, blankets and decorations were exchanged by the French traders and eventually the English traders for peltries and (later) lead. And the nemesis of the Indian, spiritous liquor, became an effective portion of the barter. French and English traders often became members of the Indian families, contributing something less than the highest elements of European civilization to Indian knowledge and experience. The name of Morgan entered the Mesquakie tribe via one of the assistants to Julien Dubuque. Dubuque had begun relations with the Mesquakie shortly after his arrival in Prairie du Chien in about 1785, just five years after the Sac chief Keokuk was born with blue eyes at Saukenuk (18, p. 27).

#### The Language Barrier

In the early time of Mesquakie history language matters presented a serious problem. The very name of the tribe caused confusion. When the first contacts with the French came in the mid-seventeenth century, various Indian tribes recognized each other before their meeting close-up by their distinctive dress, and it would be known whether a group of Indians was Mesquakie, Osakie, Sioux, Menonimee, etc. There-

fore, it is believed, when members of the Fox clan of the Mesquakie tribe were asked by some French who they were, these Mesquakie, assuming that their distinctive dress automatically gave the French the designation of their tribe, told their questioners that they were Fox (a clan group within the tribe that they would not expect nontribal members to understand). And thereafter the Mesquakie tribe, regardless of clan, was called Fox (or Renard in French). Sac or Sauk came from a shortening of the word Osakie. When the tribes joined forces they thus became called the Sac and Fox tribe<sup>1</sup> (48, p. 473).

The language barriers were further complicated by the variety of Indian languages spoken by other tribes.

The Fox tribe is called by the Chip-pa-was, Ot-tah-gah-mie; by the Sauks, or Sacs, Mus-quah-kie; by the Sioux, Mich-en-kicker-er; by the Winebagos, O-sher-a-ca; and by the French, Renard: and so of others (69, p. 21).

And one more illustration seems appropriate. The American officer, Zebulon Pike, in one point of his 1805 keelboat trip up the Mississippi, said "In my council, I spoke to a Frenchman, he to a Sioux, who interpreted to some of the Puants [Winnebagos]" (74, p. 191). Pike relied on interpreters throughout his trip. While many of the traders undoubtedly became proficient in one of the Indian tongues,

<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

or even several, it seems safest to assume that reported conversations took place through third parties unless one finds it specifically stated in sources that councils were held in a common language.

Efforts of the Young United States  
with the Sac and Fox

Established on the Mississippi, their villages largely secure from raids by neighboring tribes, the combined tribes of the Sac and Fox (Mesquakie) traded for British goods brought to Prairie du Chien and Spanish or French ones brought to St. Louis (both cities small settlements at this time-- St. Louis being in the vicinity of 1,000) and enjoyed over a half a century of relative peace and prosperity. Hunting and trapping were bountiful sources of pelts and food. Overpopulation was no problem. One estimate of the total population of the two tribes (with a significant "perhaps" attached) was 6,400--1,600 Fox and 4,800 Sac--in the year 1804 (46, p. 7). War parties against Osage, Iowa and Sioux were led, but on a scale best described as minor. However, with the sale of the Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1803, problems began for the tribes.

With the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory were to come explorers, government officials, and the first of a long line of "farmers," who were intended to convert the Indians

to the White Man's way of plentiful existence. But first a new set of traders appeared. The young United States government, disturbed at British traders' presence (as far south as the Ohio River) in the Northwest Territory, had inaugurated a government "Factory System" ("factor" meaning "trader") in 1795. The system was described by such divergent words as diplomatic, economic, military, and humanitarian. And in ways it was all of these. The English in the north and the Spanish in Florida had had great influence on the Indian tribes (the Sac and Fox were largely influenced by the English), and it was hoped that the United States would counter some of this influence. The fur trade had been a lucrative business for over 100 years, and the new nation wished a larger portion of it. Frontier warfare was a constant problem as settlers moved into Indian domain, and traders were treated abundantly well by the tribes which had come to depend on them. It was felt that United States traders would help alleviate the frontier difficulties. Lastly, this factory system was looked on as humanitarian in that the government would be fair in dealings with the Indians in supplying "the white man's goods, upon which the Indians had come to depend for their very existence..." (80, p. 87). This government factory system was to become a source of friction between the United States and Great Britain in the Mississippi Valley, with the English having the advantage of

custom and experience. That the government-run system of Indian trade would be subject to more than occasional mismanagement could have been anticipated.

In addition to factors and trade relations as matters of concern, the addition of the Louisiana Territory brought the need for military outposts. One of Pike's tasks was to recommend positions on the Mississippi for future fortifications. Many Iowans are familiar with the current recreational area near MacGregor called "Pike's Peak," which was one of the sites eventually selected (74, pp. 188-189). In keeping with the tradition established by the English of concluding formal treaties with Indian nations, the young republic of United States desired a treaty with the Sac and Fox, whose location on the Upper Mississippi suddenly had become of considerable strategic importance. On November 3, 1804, this objective was accomplished, though hardly in a fashion that heaped fame on anyone involved.

#### The 1804 Treaty

William Henry Harrison, first governor in Indiana Territory, had tried unsuccessfully since 1802 to negotiate a treaty with the Sac and Fox. The tribes were trading with the British, had aided Britain in the Revolutionary War, and were an occasional problem to the Osage who traded at St. Louis. There was no government hold on the tribes

through the factory system as yet. Government traders did not begin their contact with the Sac and Fox until 1806. While the details are obscure, a killing or killings took place at a settlement on the Cuivre River, a day's walk north of St. Louis. The settlements of Sac and Fox were alarmed (fearing retribution by the Whites) and sent a deputation of two chiefs to St. Louis with a French trader. A major Bruff sent them back with a demand for the murderers. These events happened in the early summer of 1804 (47, pp. 16-21; 18, pp. 30-33).

In October of 1804 Harrison, "...settled...in the finest mansion in the bustling little community of almost two-hundred houses," including the house of "wealthy landowner and fur trader Auguste Chouteau," was ready to deal with the deputation of Sac and Fox chiefs who brought one of the murderers to St. Louis. Harrison, dealing through an interpreter with the unsophisticated Indians who had been authorized to "wash away the tears" through a settlement with the Americans, sent the Indian delegation back with an annuity (annual payment) of \$1,000--\$600 for the Sac and \$400 for the Fox--payable in goods, and a direct payment of \$2,234.50 which appears to be the bill for whiskey at Chouteau's establishment and for presents for the chiefs. The alleged murderer held in custody was eventually pardoned, but before the pardon arrived the prisoner tried to escape and was shot (47, p. 22).

For paying the annuities and dropping the murder charges against the other Sac involved in the killings, the United States received title to the land in Illinois north of the Illinois River and into southern Wisconsin, and west to the Mississippi River. The treaty had immediate approval in Washington, but Harrison's replacement in St. Louis (and fresh governor of the Louisiana Territory), one General James Wilkinson, described by one writer (white) as "a pompous, egotistical, intriguer," arrived in July 1805 to find 150 disturbed Sac and Fox. There was talk, but the "bargain" stood.

The treaty of 1804 marked the beginning of relations between the Sac and Fox and the federal government of the United States. Black Hawk is translated as saying "It has been the origin of all our serious difficulties with the Whites" (8, p. 24). While the treaty may serve as a marker, the Sac and Fox would have lost their land near the Mississippi in any event. Before the time of the treaty and for a century after, Whites were violating the boundaries of Indian Territory. White justice prevailed, and with the rapidly increasing white settlers came a corresponding increase in the "whiskey dealer of the frontier" (80, p. 67) and a decrease in the animals which furnished the peltry that the Indians used for trade. The pattern was established roughly a century before the treaty of 1804 and continued into the twentieth century

as the white culture of organization and agriculture met the Indian culture of individuality and hunting.

Tribal History from 1804  
to 1832

The Treaty of 1804 provided (as did most Indian treaties) the Indians with the use of the land until the Whites settled it, so there was no immediate change for the two tribes. They continued their life of limited (very) agriculture and lead-mining (in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien and Dubuque), went on their hunts and traded furs. The response of the United States began immediately. In August of 1805 Zebulon Pike found William Ewing, "instructor in agriculture [,] ...established [at] a post adjacent to a Sac village near the mouth of the Des Moines" (47, p. 27). A factory (trading post) was established at the Ft. Madison site in 1808 and a fort completed there in 1809. The British furnished stiff competition for the American traders and gave the Americans as bad a reputation as possible with the Indians as the War of 1812 approached.

In 1807, William Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame) was appointed "agent for all tribes except the Osages" (47, p. 35). He proved to be a good man for his position as did Nicholas Boilvin, Indian agent (trader for the government), and Pierre Chouteau (Auguste's interpreter and brother). The



Treaty of 1804 proved to be unpopular; incidents and killings took place; the British worked through their agents and traders to sully the reputation of all things American; and some futile attempts were made by some of the Indian tribes (including the Sac and Fox) to work together as the young United States began to fortify the Mississippi River Valley. Ewing, the "agriculturist," appointed immediately following the 1804 treaty, was accused by Clark

...of unauthorized purchases in the name of the government and of trading for the Indian's guns with whiskey and then reselling them at a considerable profit to the warriors, who had to have them or starve. To buy trinkets for the Indian women he had taken to enliven his lonely outpost, Ewing had sold government corn to traders and employed on his private projects men in the pay of the government (47, pp. 34-35).

No recorded defense of the activities of Mr. Ewing was found, but the man remained in office nevertheless. Good men were needed to offset men such as Mr. Ewing who must have had friends in high places to remain in government pay.

In Pike's diary of his expedition up the Mississippi (well-stocked with whiskey and gifts) he referred to evidence of the bad press that the English personnel in the area had given to the Americans.

It is surprising what a dread the Indians in this quarter, have of Americans: I have often seen them go round islands, to avoid meeting my boat. It appears to me evident, that the traders [English] have taken great pains, to impress upon the minds of the savages, the idea of our being a very vindictive, ferocious, and warlike people (74, p. 137).

As a final example of the propaganda problem that Clark and others faced, the following excerpt from a letter to Clark from Taimah, the Fox chief for whom the present city of Tama, Iowa, is named, will serve. This was written more than twenty-five years after the voyage of Pike.

Last spring, when the unfortunate, infatuated band of our people [Black Hawk and followers], now at war with the white people, visited our village on the way to the Rock River, I, Taimah, used my best endeavors to learn their designs; and I was only able to discover this--that their minds were greatly corrupted by various foreign fable brought, I believe, from Canada, by those of our people who visit that country....

We were told that the Americans were shortly to lay hands on all our males, both young and old, and deprive them of those parts which are said to be essential to courage; then, a horde of negro men were to be brought from the South, to whom our wives, sisters, and daughters were to be given, for the purpose of raising a stock of slaves to supply the demand in this country where negros are scarce... (4, pp. 63-64).

Difficulties between the United States and England finally resulted in the War of 1812. In the traditional pattern, members of the Sac and Fox tribe split. 1500 of them remained largely neutral and in 1813 moved to the Missouri hunting grounds. There they depended on American good will and an American factor (government trader) (47, pp. 57-59). Others, however, recalling incidents such as the attempted takeover of the Dubuque lead mines [the Fox held these following the death of Julien Dubuque] by agent Nicholas Boilvin and sixty white men (47, pp. 43-44), gave

their sympathies and some military aid to the English. Ft. Madison, attacked unsuccessfully shortly after it had been put up in 1809, was burned and abandoned in September of 1813, the force stationed there tunneling out to the river bank in order to escape the Sac and Fox braves (18, p. 57). Black Hawk led a force of Indians for the English for a time. Lack of credit from the American government trader and two boatloads of "gifts" from a British trader seem to have been the deciding factors in the decision to cast lots with England (18, pp. 52-53).

While there were people shot, the majority of the Sac and Fox took little part in the fighting. They and the increasing number of white settlers spent some uneasy times, but there was no all-out, clear-cut battling in the Mississippi River Valley. Near Detroit, Black Hawk discovered that Americans could fight, and lacking victories and plunder, left for Saukenuk with "twenty of my braves" (18, pp. 52-53).

Back on the Mississippi, wind and river current proved to be more decisive than anything else as Major John Campbell (going up river to secure Prairie du Chien) lost twenty out of one-hundred soldiers at the Rock Rapids area in mid-July of 1814 (47, p. 65). Zachary Taylor and more than 300 men ran into wind and rain and a few English artillery pieces (British manned) in the same area in early October of the same year (47, pp. 70-71). While the Sac and Fox warriors

had not been defeated, the treaty between England and the United States on December 24, 1814, left the combined tribe at the mercy of the latter.

Following the treaty with the English, the Americans lost no time in fortifying the Upper Mississippi. One of the first new fortifications begun was Ft. Armstrong on Rock Island. This was near the village of Saukenuk and the rapids where Campbell and Taylor had suffered their setbacks on the way to Prairie du Chien. There Ft. Crawford was now being constructed. Ft. Snelling near the present site of Minneapolis was also built at this time. Along with the sudden military consolidation came the reaffirmation in May of 1816 of the Treaty of 1804 which had ceded land in Wisconsin and Illinois to the United States. Governor Harrison (seven years after the 1804 treaty a success at Tippecanoe) had made an agreement with

...five drunken, irresponsible representatives of the Sauk and Fox Indians whereby all the land between the Mississippi and the Illinois and Fox Rivers as far north as the Wisconsin was ceded to the United States (75, p. 363).

The treaty was now more solemnly made official.

After the War of 1812 (it was almost the beginning of 1815 when it ended) the Sac and Fox began to suffer the fate of tribes before them who had been faced with increasing contact with the Whites. In the decade prior to the closing of this war the favor of the tribes had been courted by both the

English and the Americans. Their movements had been principally at their own volition, and they had been able to trade with the British at Prairie du Chien or with the Americans at St. Louis (or with representatives of either at various points between). While the Treaty of 1804 had ceded lands east of the Mississippi to the Whites, the Indians were free to use these lands for hunting and lead mining until the country was more settled. The Sac and Fox had been more concerned with the presence of Ft. Madison and its garrison than they had been with settlers and lead miners.

The two decades following the War of 1812 brought continually increasing pressure from white settlers until the fields of Saukenuk itself were being planted by Whites. Hundreds of miners, notably under one flamboyant Henry Dodge, had been organized and were mining lead near Prairie du Chien. In May of 1822 the factory system was brought to an end and "trade now became the unimpeded domain of the private traders and the powerful fur company" (The American Fur Company under John Jacob Astor) (80, p. 92). With the incursions by settlers of the Illinois Territory on their hunting and trapping lands, the tribes hunted and trapped more to the west. The Fox and then the Sac began to have difficulties with other tribes over hunting and trapping rights, particularly with the Sioux. When these intertribal wars began, the reaction of the American Fur Company was to seek

their ending through governmental pressure. This resulted in such measures as the withholding of annuities. Thus the Sac and Fox (and other tribes) were caught in an ever-tightening circle with no good way out. Trips by tribal chiefs such as Taimah and Keokuk to Washington and the East to negotiate with the government were made after the war with England (as they had been before it), and councils among the Sac and Fox, Sioux, Winnebago, Chippewa, Pottawatomie and Iowa were held, but the situation had no real possibility of improvement. "The government meant to restrain and govern the advance of the Whites not to prevent it forever" (80, p. 186).

Liquor, from the beginning of European civilization of the continent, was a constant problem in Indian trade and regulations. The demand for it was such that, without using whiskey, legitimate traders could not compete with the unlicensed and more unscrupulous trading members of the frontier. The American Fur Company needed it to compete with the British. Ruses to get whiskey into Indian country included "Boatmen's whiskey," supposedly taken for use by the keel-boatmen on the river craft. But most went to Indians and to settlements in or near Indian country (such as Prairie du Chien) from which the Indians who wished could readily obtain it. Far smaller outfits than the American Fur Company fought with legal action when they were caught with the goods and they would use sources available to them in Washington (80, pp. 102-103). Legal

action against officers and agents was a real threat if those individuals tried to prevent the whiskey traffic. Even if they won the law suits (to which they were then liable) they were highly inconvenienced and poorly backed in Washington (80, p. 134). With the increase in population near the Indian lands, liquor was more available to the Sac and Fox. "Our people got more liquor from the small traders than customary." Many of the Sac and Fox did not travel out too far to hunt, and rather than save their hides for paying off the trader they "would sell them to the settlers for whiskey" and by spring the Indian families would be destitute (8, p. 67).

Pressure from settlers mounted in Illinois to have the Sac and Fox moved to the western side of the Mississippi. Suggestions for the sale of the mining areas held by the Fox (with occasional assistance from the United States Army (80, pp. 180-182)) increased. Finally, the city of Saukenuk and the lands adjoining it were left to the Whites and the Sac and Fox were no longer able to live and hunt freely in the Illinois and Southern Wisconsin areas that they had possessed since about 1750. The terms of the treaty of 1804 had come to full fruition. But feelings were bitter, and Black Hawk and some nine-hundred followers (about 400 braves) precipitated a half-year combination of tragedy and comedy that came to be known as the Black Hawk War.

Events Prior to the  
Black Hawk War

The Black Hawk War began in the spring of 1832, but throughout the interim between the close of the War of 1812 and this time, events had built towards it which finally culminated in the last serious threat to white security that was made by the Sac and Fox. The tribe had split into factions led by Keokuk and Black Hawk, the former being much more amenable to white annuities and the accompanying suggestions as to conduct and policy. The group led by Keokuk moved to the Iowa side of the Mississippi from the Saukenkuk area in 1830. Black Hawk and his followers hung on till they were forced out by a combination of troops and settlers in 1831. Faced by a President (Jackson) who felt that the two tribes had been on the wrong side of the British-American altercation and by an Illinois governor who backed the Saukenkuk squatters by raising an ill-disciplined army of 2,000 volunteers, Black Hawk and his group were evicted in an unseemly manner in June of 1831 and Saukenkuk was burned.

The events around this period were furnished with all the elements of a romantic novel, at least as they appeared in the available sources. Black Hawk was led on by promises of British and Indian aid from a somewhat sinister Indian character called "The Prophet." A speech by Black Hawk was conveyed to the Whites by a white man hidden for the purpose



by Keokuk. Pressure for increased annuities for the Indians to keep them west of the river and from the early-settling Whites was accompanied by pressure on the Mesquakie for mineral rights to the lead-mining area near Dubuque. While Black Hawk and his followers crossed the Mississippi well below Ft. Armstrong and proceeded north, Keokuk gathered some 200 braves and proceeded north on the west side of the river. Later Keokuk's force of 200 was taken north by steamer and disembarked opposite Ft. Armstrong (18, pp. 122-123). Black Hawk and his men reached Rock Island on April 11, and there was speculation about a "gunpowder plot," but Atkinson (the "White Beaver" for whom Ft. Atkinson--now restored in Northeast Iowa--is named), leader of the Army troops, arrived with his forces, and Black Hawk moved north to the vicinity of the Rock River (18, pp. 124-126).

The Mesquakie did not take much part in the Black Hawk War. Most of those who did accompany Black Hawk were involved in a massacre of some thirty Menominee who were camped some two miles from Ft. Crawford (near present day Prairie du Chien) toward the end of July 1831. This was in a response to a massacre in March of 1830 of seventeen Mesquakie (in both instances the victims had "overindulged"), but the government was taking measures against such Indian justice and demanded that some of the participants be turned over to Federal officials for punishment (47, pp. 134-135). Eventual-

ly Keokuk's band did give up three of "the Menonminee murderers" early in the Black Hawk War (about April 28) and "proved itself" to the Whites (47, p. 149). So some of the Mesquakie found it in their best interests to accompany Black Hawk and become part of the "British Band," as his forces were called, and thus avoid prison.

Table 1. Dates in Mesquakie history to 1815

Date	Event
1656	The Mesquakie are located in the Fox River and Lake Winnebago region
1734	Sac and Fox driven from Green Bay locale
1755	Sac near Davenport area (Saukenuk), Fox near Dubuque and Prairie du Chien
1785	Julien Dubuque arrives at Prairie du Chien
1803	Louisiana Territory sold to United States
1804	First Sac and Fox treaty with United States
1805	Zebulon Pike's trip up the Mississippi River
1808	Government factory at Fort Madison site
1809	Fort Madison built
1812 to 1814	War of 1812, Fort Madison burned

## The Black Hawk War

The "war" began very gently with Atkinson apparently hoping that Black Hawk would see the impossible position he was in and return quietly to the west bank of the Mississippi. But green volunteer troops, eager for combat (until it actually arrived), brought on a disaster at Stillman's Run (called this later from the precipitate retreat of the volunteers). Black Hawk sent eight braves to a forward camp of Atkinson's forces under Major Stillman to (apparently) negotiate. Three of these eight went in to the camp and were promptly seized. The eager recruits spotted the five remaining Indians in the distance; and assuming that the Indians were trying to trick them, many jumped on horses and began a wild chase. A few of the Indians were killed, but those who escaped reached a portion of Black Hawk's force and some forty warriors were readied for the coming troops. It was dusk; and when the front-running volunteers were suddenly faced with forty warriors, the pursuit turned into a headlong retreat. The troops' camp and all was abandoned as they panicked and "Stillman's Run" ended down-river at Dixon's Ferry. Most of the danger had blossomed in the minds of the green troops. Ironically the only ones who stood their ground were killed and Black Hawk's braves left eleven bodies hacked and mutilated.

Two-hundred and seventy-five volunteers were reduced by

eleven, and Black Hawk had a "victory." But now bloodshed had precluded a quiet surrender or a return to safer ground. White forces raised against the old chief's group increased from roughly 2,000 to 4,000. Some settlers were killed in a style similar to that of the few brave men who made a stand at Stillman's Run. Some political reputations were enhanced. Winfield Scott lost about ninety officers and men to cholera at Chicago (no large city there yet). But the end result was the finish of Black Hawk as a force among the Sac and Fox and the ugly defeat of those who had followed him (8, 18, 47).

Black Hawk, despite the victory at Stillman's Run, was in difficulty. Though the state of Illinois was sparsely settled in the northwest area, it still had a population of over 150,000; and Henry Dodge had an organized force of some 200 miners near Prairie du Chien. There was no British aid for the Indians, and there was only token assistance from such tribes as the Pottawatomie and the Winnebago. By the summer of 1832 food had become a problem. Black Hawk had women and children to feed and a force of only 400 braves. The eventual outcome of the endeavor had become obvious.

The "British Band" made its way to the Mississippi in early August of 1832. There, attempts at surrender were ignored, and at the "battle" of Bad Axe, up river from Prairie du Chien, large numbers of Indians were shot. They were

surrounded by white forces on shore and fired at from a steamboat on the river. Those from the starved and decimated group who managed to cross the river (some in hastily made canoes of green elm bark) were subjected to attacks from the Sioux who waited for them on the opposite shore. Black Hawk himself was later turned over to Zachary Taylor, commander at Ft. Crawford at Prairie du Chien. Shortly thereafter he was sent under the guard of one Jefferson Davis to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. The defeat was utter and complete. Aside from cholera victims (140 plus) the war had left some 200 Whites dead and some 600 Indians dead (the latter figure is the writer's estimate) (18, pp. 219-222). Because of the increased numbers and strength of Whites as well as the decreased numbers of the Indians, the Sac and Fox were more than ever left to the mercies of the United States Government.

#### Land Cessions, Kansas, Eventual Return to Iowa

For thirteen years after the end of the Black Hawk War the Sac and Fox remained in Iowa. Promptly after the war another land cession was arranged. This one was made up of a strip along the west bank of the Mississippi of not less than fifty miles in width, supposedly to keep the Indians out of contact with Whites. Negotiations, largely with the chiefs under the leadership of Keokuk, continued along with trips to

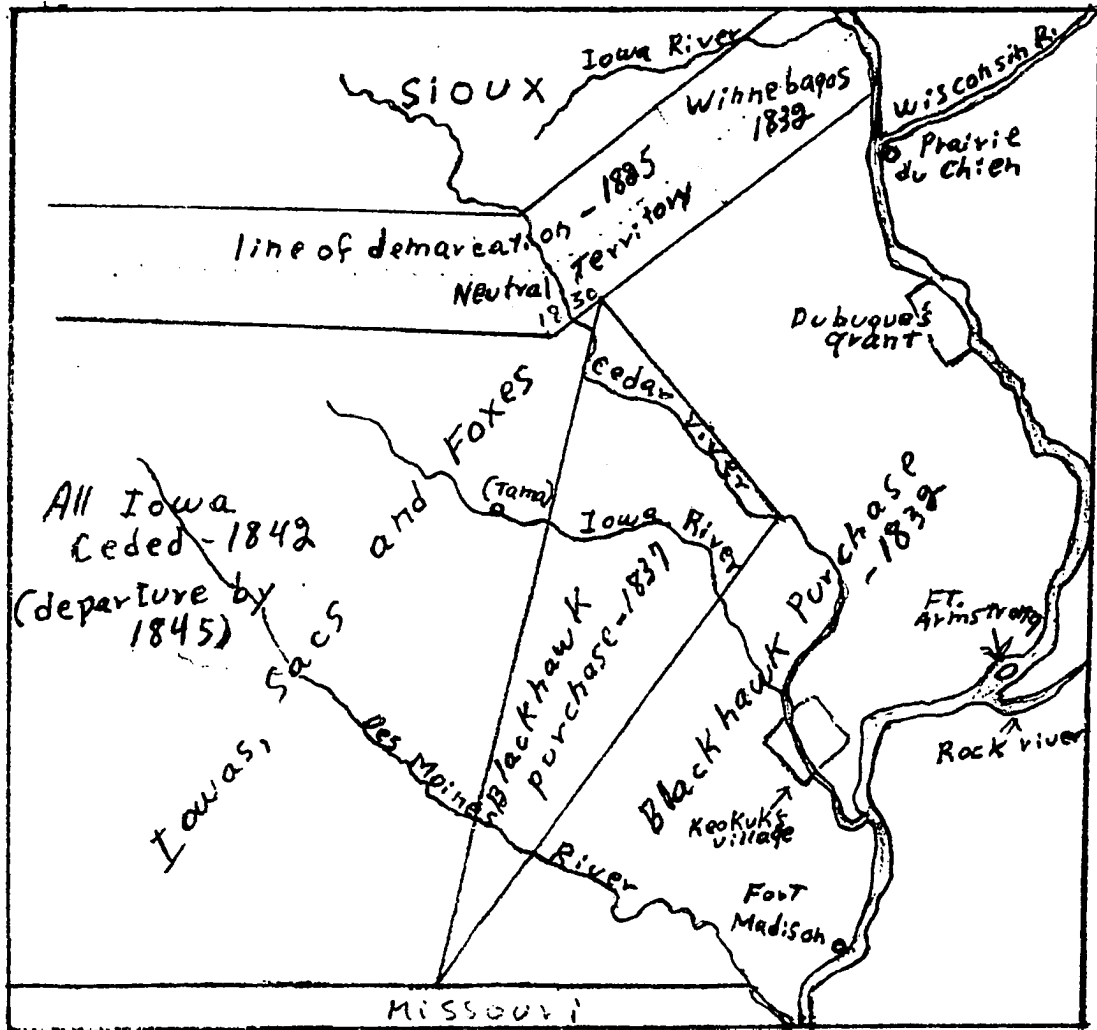


Figure 2. Cessions following the Black Hawk War (76, p. 53)

Washington by these same chiefs. Another major cession took place in 1837, and finally in 1842 the remainder of the Sac and Fox claims in Iowa were "settled" with the tribes to vacate to another location by 1845.

The settlements and annuities received in return for leaving the lands occupied by the tribe came in rather ample sums. To many it appeared that these annuities and lands, given to the Indians in exchange for the areas previously held, would enable the Indians to find a livelihood and eventually to assimilate with the white population. Most assumed that tribal life and religion would disappear and that Indians in general, and the Sac and Fox in particular, would take up a life of agriculture as the most efficacious and obvious way of supporting themselves. But theory was one thing and practice quite another.

The settlements and annuities the Indians received rarely reached their hands at all, and if they did the amounts reaching them were meagre. Credit was extended by the traders who then received either a portion of the annuities or cash settlements shortly after the treaty negotiations. In one instance during the 1842 negotiations, the traders scaled down their claims from \$312,366.24 to \$252,564.24. The annuities and future annuities of the Indians during this period were largely traded away for whiskey and "frippery" (18, pp. 275-277).

The treaties with the Sac and Fox as they lived their last days in Iowa provided annuities, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, mills to grind flour, tobacco allotment and the like, but with whiskey at twenty-five cents a quart the Indians fared rather poorly. Goods were purchased from traders and often these were then traded for whiskey. All efforts of agents such as John Beach to stop the whiskey traffic (Beach once dug up 60 kegs of hog lard on suspicion) failed to keep the monies intended for Sac and Fox welfare and maintenance from being consumed in the form of whiskey illegally sold to them. Some purchased

...8 and 10 dollar cloths (judging from the quality) fine calicoes, calfskin boots, side saddles, shoes, shawls--a very small portion of which reaches their home, but much of it is traded at a fraction of its cost for whiskey. In fact there is a store a few miles from this place [the agency, located where the present town of Agency is now located] in which whiskey was the only original article, that has become stocked by exchange with the returning Indians with a large though badly assorted quantity of goods, useless to them (6, Beach to Crawford, 1840).

Squatters moved into territories nominally Indian and planted crops, and in 1840 agent Beach waited to remove a group of squatters until October in order to give them time to harvest. This seeming generosity to law-breakers has to be seen in light of Beach's general lack of troops to enforce his directives (save at disbursement of annuity payments). Later after army posts (such as Fort Des Moines) had been located among or near the Sac and Fox to protect them from



unscrupulous Whites in general and whiskey dealers in particular, a Davenport reporter maintained that one Captain Allen gave liquor to the Indians and that Fort Des Moines "corrupted and lowered them" [the Indians] more into "degradation" and "vice" than had the ten previous years of "intercourse" (33a, p. 17). The temptation of engaging in the whiskey traffic proved too much for many early settlers and squatters and portions of the army as well. Beach's letters to Governors and other supervisors over the years 1840 to 1847 referred constantly to the problem of the illegitimate whiskey traffic.

Difficulties other than whiskey and its draining of Indian goods and money emerged. A severe winter in 1843 caused the death of about one-half of the Indians' horses and ponies. Beach was at odds with Governor Lucas, and disappointed traders (refused a license to trade by Beach) sought assistance from the agent's superiors. The Indians were scattered in villages and simply getting a council together was difficult. The move to Kansas did little to alleviate problems. The tribes split on the issue of moving at all, though they had really no choice. Once in Kansas, Indians were robbed, and were traded "hot" horses and "homing" horses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hot horses were ones freshly stolen. Once they had been purchased the real owner was apt to appear. Homing horses, after being purchased would tend to wander back to the man who had traded them to the Indians.

They were continually beset by "knaves, speculators, horse thieves and whiskey merchants." Annuities largely meant a harvest for the hovering groups of Whites who represented a low stratum of American society. Some of the Indians starved to death during this period. Most suffered badly (6, to Harvey, March 4, 1846).

The Sac and Fox had had difficult times during their stay in Iowa. The size of the tribes shrank from under 6,000 at the end of the Black Hawk War to under 3,000 during the following thirteen-year stretch. Disease and a generally unsettled condition of life had depleted their population more drastically than the war had. Bitterness over Keokuk's control over annuities (paid to him and other chiefs who had not belonged to the British Band and had largely cooperated with the government and then distributed to individual tribal members) and government interference with tribal leadership contributed to this bitterness as well as had disagreement as to whether land sales should take place or not. "...any Indian who was so foolish as to challenge Keokuk's authority would find himself excluded from the annuity payment" (47, p. 209). Hunting was usually away from the Mississippi and to the west, and there the tribal members risked contact with the hostile Sioux. When the Sac and Fox moved to the Kansas Reservation the traders went with them, and their problems continued there.

Famous Historical Names Associated with  
the Tribes

With what Hagan called the "Iowa Interlude" (47) the association of the Sac and Fox with names famous in American history began to end. Washington Irving visited Black Hawk at Jefferson Barracks (18, p. 237), and on a Washington trip Black Hawk informed President Jackson that "I am one man, you are another," and these names were added to those of Julien Dubuque, Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Winfield Scott, William Henry Harrison, William Clark, Zebulon Pike and Abraham Lincoln (through the Black Hawk War and a most tenuous association!) to make up an impressive list of notables who became famous, usually after their association with the tribe, and whose names are recognized today by most Americans.

While the appearance of these famous names makes a study of the Mesquakie somewhat more exciting, it tends to obscure the rather devastating ugliness of the times for "The People" during the decades from 1830 to 1860. There is still bitterness over these times among the Mesquakie today<sup>1</sup>. It needs to be seen as a time of great insecurity, disease, and death for great numbers of Sac and Fox.

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<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

### The Beginning and Growth of the Tama Settlement

After the removal of most (some may have remained in the state on an unofficial basis, many areas being unsettled at this time) of the Sac and Fox to the reservation in Kansas, problems of annuities and tribal government continued. In Kansas the tribes hunted on the surrounding plains and had skirmishes with Indian tribes already there, such as the Comanche. Dissatisfaction with matters appeared to have come to a head following the deaths of some 300 Indians from small-pox on the Kansas reservation in 1851. The Mesquakie were hit hardest because they followed the advice of tribal medicine men and refused vaccination (38, p. 67). In the winter of 1851-52 some 100 Indians, largely Mesquakie, returned to Iowa from Kansas. They were permitted to stay in the Tama area, and finally in 1857, through an act of the Iowa legislature, five Indians purchased 80 acres for some \$735.00 (5, p. 1), this being held in trust by the governor of the state. This was the beginning of the current Mesquakie settlement near Tama. Hagan describes the white settlers in Iowa at this time as "sympathetic," but he adds that "the reason for this completely unprecedented attitude by whites must have been the government payments.... Indians who brought thousands of dollars annually into a community were too valuable to merchants and whiskey sellers to be permitted to escape." The cynical atti-

tude of Hagan appears justified. Iowa legislators did take prompt steps to obtain the annuity payments for the returned Indians.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, that the consent of the State is hereby given that the Indians now residing in Tama County known as a portion of the Sacs and Foxes, be permitted to remain and reside in said State, and that the Governor be requested to inform the Secretary of War thereof, and urge on said department, the propriety of paying said Indians their proportion of the annuities due or to become due to said Tribe of Sac and Fox Indians [emphasis mine] (96, p. 181).

The Mesquakie, settled in Iowa and having title to at least a spot that they could call their collective own, gradually increased until the tribe numbered some 345 in 1879 and the size of the settlement totalled some 692 acres. The main additions to the original returnees came first in 1862 when one Mowmenwahnecah, who opposed methods of annuity payment in Kansas, brought "five or six lodges" back to Iowa (47, p. 233). In 1869, when the bulk of the Sac were heading for Oklahoma, one group under Mokohoko split into three factions. One group remained in Kansas, a second went to Nebraska, and one group returned to Iowa and the settlement at Tama. The addition of this last group largely completed the growth of the settlement which was due to returnees. It should be noted that those who came to Iowa were led by and composed of the malcontents: those who opposed the breaking up of the reservation in Kansas into land parcels owned in "severality,"

those most suspicious of "white" ways and those most attached to their tribal customs and beliefs.

Prior to the appointment of Leander Clark as the first of the United States Indian agents to the settlement (called "reservation" in thosedays and until the 1950s) difficulty over annuities was encountered by the Sac and Fox in Iowa. The Mesquakie, as it is perhaps better to call them now, were resistant to pressure through the withholding of annuities (to get them to return to the reservation in Kansas) and lived without them for about six years, remaining in Iowa under rather restricted circumstances until the late 1860's. They "eke out a precarious existence in Iowa by hunting, fishing, begging" (37, p. 251). Times were most difficult even though some traveled back to Kansas for annuity payments there.

Part of a new treaty, negotiated with the Sac and Fox combined tribes in 1859, provided that absent Sac and Fox had one year to rejoin their fellows in Kansas or lose their share of the annuities provided by the new treaty (47, p. 239). After the appointment of Clark in July of 1866, the Mesquakie were again the recipients of annuities, the first share of the \$51,000 that the combined tribes received was just over \$5,500 (15, p. 253), and it may be assumed that this renewed source of income improved not only the well-being of the tribe but its status and welcome in the community. The "now somewhat dilapidated village of Indiantown" as an 1870 author

described it (25, p. 363) was no Saukenuk, however.

The area of the settlement remained at 80 acres from 1857 until 1865 when an additional 40 acres were purchased for "timber," presumably for fuel. Through November of 1896 a total of twenty-one purchases were made, from 10 acres to 280 acres in size and in dollar amounts from \$200 to \$10,000. As of 1911, nearly 3,400 acres had been purchased and the settlement has remained near this size ever since (30). The Mesquakies on the settlement supported themselves with a combination of annuities, gardens and agriculture, hunting and fishing--the winter hunts lasting into the early twenties. They maintained large numbers of ponies, having some 700 remaining after a sale of 200 around 1880 (they are referred to in the report as "horses," and it is impossible to know what the terms mean with much precision) (32, p. 441). Presumably they supported the ponies on forage available in unfarmed areas or ran them on harvested fields. Most Mesquakie were still being born in wickiups at the beginning of the twentieth century, frame dwellings not being common on the settlement until about 1916. The following is an example of how the Mesquakie appeared to a Tama White near the turn of the century.

Four hundred members of a prehistoric race, residing on an average of a little more than 8 acres of land among the hills, groves and meadows which skirt the banks of the beautiful Iowa River in Tama County, enjoying the rude wild life and cherishing the customs of their ancestors of a century ago, relishing the dog feast and growing zealous in the

medicine dance, marrying and divorcing as their fathers did before the light of a Christian civilization spread beyond the banks of the Mississippi River, without a church or Catholic faith, although for fifteen years devoted missionaries have faithfully ministered to their physical wants and zealously tried to make the story of Christ music to their barbaric ears and comfort to their disquieted souls, clinging firmly and steadfastly in life and the hour of death to the superstitions of their ancestral warriors of a hundred years ago, has been such an anomaly in the history of the North American Indian as the Indian Bureau was until recent years disposed to disbelieve. Yet such is no overdrawn picture of the life of the Muskwaki Indians as they have resided in Iowa over forty years (26, p. 3).

The Mesquakie had maintained their religion, life style, and what one of the writer's students called "integrity" in Iowa for over forty years, but events were closing in.

Table 2. Dates in Mesquakie history, 1815 to 1880

Date	Event
1816	Treaty of 1804 reaffirmed Fort Armstrong built on Rock Island Fort Crawford built at Prairie du Chien Fort Snelling built at Minneapolis site (present)
1831	Menominee massacre by Fox near Fort Crawford
1832	Black Hawk War Second land cession, fifty mile strip in Iowa
1837	Third land cession, strip straightened
1842	All claims in Iowa ceded
1845	Sac and Fox removed to the Kansas reservation
1851-52	First return, 100 to Iowa (smallpox in Kansas)



Table 2 (Continued)

Date	Event
1857	First 80 acres purchased
1862	Mowmenwahnecah returns (difficulties with annuities)
1866	Leander Clark first agent of the Iowa Sac and Fox. Iowa annuity payments begin
1869	Most Sac to Oklahoma, some of the Mokohoko faction remove to Iowa
1875	First government school building built on the settlement near Tama
1879	Carlisle begins

## A CENTURY OF "EDUCATION"

Early Efforts in Schooling at  
the Settlement

Forms of a federally maintained school were operative on the settlement from 1876 to 1898. This operation has been briefly described as: "a complete failure" (53, p. 49).

But the history of government school efforts which began in 1875 is varied. The agents, farmers and teachers worked within their capabilities (with one notable exception) and seemed practical enough about matters. There was great resistance on the part of the tribe to traditional reading and writing, but industrial subjects and arts had a better reception. Agents in charge had matters other than schooling to occupy most of their time and they worked toward such goals as cutting the size of the pony herd and helping in some measure to alleviate poverty on the settlement. Reverend Howbert in 1874 got some 100 acres of ground plowed for the tribe, and hoe [garden] crops were started, but in "latter July" the Great Spirit told the men that they must hunt and fish and leave work to the squaws. Most left for an Iowa-Nebraska deer hunt (3, Howbert, 1874, p. 199). Later agents faced similar discouraging situations along with floods, whiskey, and finances.

With Thomas Free as agent in September of 1875, the first of the settlement school buildings was up and ready. Finally,

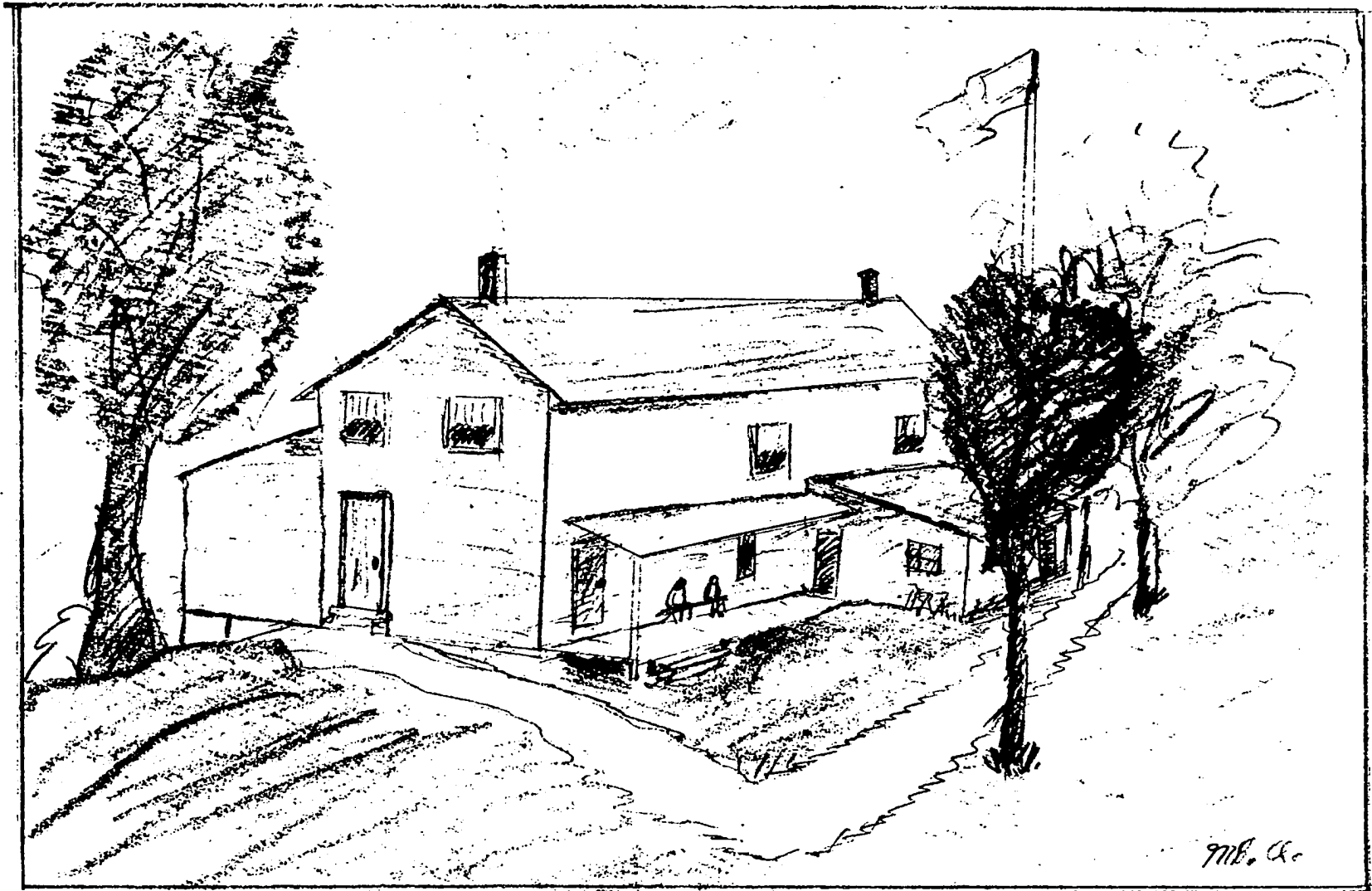


Figure 3. Government agency building and first school (circa 1880) (32, p. 432)

a teacher was employed in November. The "teacher in charge" instructed in agriculture, helped settlement people in the winter and furnished his own team of horses. Free asked for a regular interpreter "from their own class" both for "their [the Indians] general interest" and to be used "in the school-room." But, by 1877 though "they have a good schoolhouse" Free did not feel that it had enough chance of success to justify the hiring of a teacher that year. The "school" was not closed entirely however, but "An irregular attendance through the farmer<sup>1</sup> employed" was maintained (3, Free, 1875, p. 290; 1876, p. 60; 1877). By 1878 Free had contacted churches but found that they wished money for their educational efforts. "The schoolhouse is kept open...books have been distributed among them," and some [miraculously] had learned to read and to write. The farmer lived in the second story of the school building [Free seems to have maintained his office at Toledo, Iowa] and tried to get the Indians interested in education, but all seemed to continue in a haphazard manner (3, Free, 1878, pp. 71-72).

Under George Davenport, agent from 1878 to 1885, the "schooling" continued as before.

There is not regular attendance at school, but the school house is kept open and every opportunity [sic] improved to teach them and remove the prejudice

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<sup>1</sup>For a description of Indian farmers, men employed by the government to furnish examples and assistance to the Indians in agricultural pursuits, see below.

existing by reason of their religious belief against education. Books have been distributed among them and in this irregular manner some of them have learned to read and write. The Instructor resides in the second story of the school building and gives his entire time and attention to the advancement of his subjects in agriculture as well as education, and carefully attends to the sick and infirm (16, p. 55).

The building in which school was most informally and irregularly kept was still "The only government building on their reservation," and was "occupied for the agency office, schoolroom, and residence of the agent, farmer and teacher" (32, p. 536). A picture of the agency at the "Musquakie settlement," a drawing done about 1880, shows a building of two stories, about 20 by 40 with lean-tos added, one lean-to of about 20' by 40' is clear.

While most of the Indians of the settlement did not take to regular attendance and books written of white concerns, "a large number" of the settlement did speak English and "Most of the young men can read and write in their own language" [emphasis mine] (32, p. 533).

These Indians have a great dislike and prejudice to regular schools, and all I have been able to do is to teach them in a general and irregular manner. The women who have attended the industrial school have made very good progress in learning all kinds of sewing and household work, and a few have learned to read and write. The Indians prefer to teach one another to read and write in their own language [emphasis mine]; and great progress has been made in their education in that way. They understand well the use of postal cards and postoffice money orders, and carry on a large correspondence with themselves and the Indians of Kansas and Indian Territory [Indian Territory is now Oklahoma] (32, p. 534).

It should be noted that Davenport "understood their language well and could converse fluently with them" (14, p. 34).

One lady teacher (identified only as "She" in the report) who "had acquired a knowledge of the Indian language" and was beloved by "women and children" died in August of 1881 (3, Davenport, 1881). The Indian children were then forbidden to attend school. But the school stopped and started sporadically, and a teacher was recorded as having resigned in 1882. With this resignation came one Allie B. Busby [see Bibliography] who began to teach during the school year in 1882 and continued through the death of Davenport in 1885. She was assisted by Anna Skea, missionary. Attendance was "very small" to begin with and by 1885 "some progress" was indicated. O. H. Mills in his 1885 report indicated that "... in drawing some of our pupils really excel [sic]" (3, Davenport, 1882-84; Mills, 1885, p. 109).

Busby's tenure at Mesquakia furnished her with material for a book in 1886. She noted that among her pupils "i is always sounded e and e a." This can be explained by the exposure of the Mesquakie to French writing prior to contact with English. Notes found in spots about the school ground were written in Mesquakie. "Interpreted," they proved to be love notes of an innocent nature (12, p. 172). Visitors came to the school, and while some were careless of Indian

feelings<sup>1</sup> most of the visitors seemed to have meant well enough (12, p. 177). Despite threats of violence from a few irate and perhaps inebriated parents, Busby seemed to have fared well enough, and she continued teaching in Indian schools elsewhere on leaving Tama County.

For a few years the settlement at Tama was seemingly ignored. No annual reports appeared. When Enos Green took over in May of 1888 there was no "school teacher, no farmer or employe" of any kind, or money" save that furnished by Green. Green noted that the school had been closed "many months." Little seems to have been done at the settlement in the matter of schooling attempts, but a small school had been maintained by Anna Skea in Tama with an average attendance of seven. Agent Green recommended the discontinuance of the settlement school, calling it "a complete failure" (3, Green, 1888).

When agent Lesser took over from Green in 1890, there was "no school at present." He was faced with the problem of the Indian affinity for horseflesh, saying that "they use their best land for pasturage for the 700 head of ponies." In addition the tribe owed a total of \$12,000 to local merchants. And "As I am not allowed a regular interpreter, I find it very difficult to make myself clearly understood....

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<sup>1</sup>A specific instance was given. An important visitor struck an Indian's hat from his head as he was seated in the school, the Indian being unaware of the custom of removal.

[It is] almost impossible to explain an ordinary transaction" (3, Lesser, 1890, pp. 104-105). Lesser did manage to get the tribe to go along with school attendance for those who wished to attend. In December of 1891 Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morgan paid a two-day visit to the area. Apparently the condition of the school was unimpressive at that time since Morgan gave his personal order that the school should have its location moved from the government building to the Presbyterian mission house, about a mile east of the original government school building. This was accomplished on February 1, 1892 (3, Lesser, 1892, p. 267). For some four years this home (erected in 1891 and still standing and in good repair) served as the location of the government school on the settlement. An arrangement was made with the missionary (Anna Skea) whereby Mesquakie children could attend classes while their mothers obtained instruction in such areas as sewing in other portions of the building.

Attendance appears to have been erratic, but to have averaged out at about 10 (3, Lesser, 1892-1893, p. 155). Educational efforts seemed to have been centered on practical arts as well as reading and spelling, the latter two being taught from a chart and first, second and third readers. Mr. Stoops, the government teacher during the first years of this school, went among the Mesquakie (in the village south of the Iowa River at this time) in the summer in addition to carrying on



his assignment at the mission throughout the year. Two of the most promising pupils "committed suicide" in the year of 1892-93 over what Stoops considered to be affairs not connected with education. While this must have been discouraging, Stoops seems to have contributed a bit to his school problems. For two years he lacked materials for carpentry (3, Lesser, 1892-1893, p. 154).

With the coming of Horace Rebok to the agent's post, one Edward Reardon, government teacher at the mission house, was encouraged to make a candid report (a somewhat unusual phenomenon) which was included in Rebok's annual report of 1895 (3, pp. 169-170). In 1894 Stoops furnished no attendance figures though he did mention a problem in that pupils over 18 could no longer attend due to a ruling from the government. Stoops considered the school well-equipped and the work "satisfactory and pleasant" considering the "opposition" [emphasis by Stoops]. Reardon's report follows:

The mission building is one-half mile from the border of Indian land [The government building, which had housed the school and various employees, was considered unfit for use as a school].

...the attendance during the school year has averaged 10, while there are 120 of legal school age [through 18]. The annual annuity last November, hunting in the winter months, and the dance, feast, and adoption during the closing months of the school year have reduced the attendance. The lowest average was in January, the highest in April, which was 11. The attendance throughout the year has been periodic and the Government school work secondary to the dance feast and adoption (3, Rebok, 1895, p. 169).

There was little organization, and hours were irregular. The students came and left at will. If efforts at correction were too pronounced, the students would "answer you in the Indian language, drop their work, and disappear 'to return no more.'" In addition Indian mothers came to the mission house to sew. They were too close and sometimes came into the school room or simply spoke (in Mesquakie) from the doorway, causing a student to drop his books and leave. Reardon thought that both school and missionary work would be assisted by a boarding school where "these obnoxious intruders [the Mesquakie mothers] would be compelled to remain away" (3, Rebok, 1895, p. 169).

Stoops, who had taught at the government school earlier, began an industrial school at the original government building in January of 1896. Some changes were made in the manner of operation. Reading and writing were completed in the morning and carpentry, garden-making and the like were done in the afternoon. Stoops found this method a "great improvement" over "attempting to have school all day." The remodeling necessary at the building was done by the students. Acquiring the habits of washing one's face and hands and combing one's hair were looked on as important features of the training. Stoops mentioned that "a noon-day meal is furnished...and this helps attendance" (3, Rebok, 1896, p. 163). This school operated through the spring of 1898 and then closed in anticipation of the opening of the boarding school in the fall of 1898.

White Concern over Mesquakie Education  
at the Turn of the Century

Perhaps, had the Mesquakie been permitted to handle things in their own way and in their own time, the interest in writing messages in Mesquakie would have led to interest in other areas. Reading and writing in English, studying history other than that of the tribe itself, and taking vocational training of a useful and interesting nature would have all come by themselves and in response to popular demand. But the White idea of assimilation was not becoming a reality. While sewing and carpentry were accepted to a mild degree, the great bulk of the tribe was not proficient in English and showed little interest in becoming so. Only some fifteen percent (this writer's estimate) were exposed to formal schooling through two decades of effort, and this meagre performance was tolerated rather than accepted by the tribal leaders. Some few Mesquakie had attended boarding schools away from the reservation by this time, but practical results, in the opinion of people living near the settlement, were almost nonexistent. Alleviation of the poverty conditions on the settlement (brought home to Whites by the begging of some tribal members) had not taken place. Few if any "Christians" had emerged within the tribe. With development Tama and Toledo had become more than "pioneer villages," and "Protestant morality came to Tama County" (38, p. 72). Demand had significantly

increased for what amounted to the acculturation of the Mesquakie.

An author of the time, former school teacher Allie B. Busby, remarking the lack of success in work with the tribe, wrote "But let us hope that a brighter day may soon dawn, when the rites of Pagan worship shall give place to the humble supplication of the devout Christian" (12, p. 226). Busby earlier in her book painted a dismal picture of dirt and ignorance in depicting settlement life. She spoke of the mistake of letting this people live in "semi-barbarism, making no advancement in any way, and changing in no respect their mode of life." She felt that the Mesquakie should not have been allowed to hold land except on condition of "the education of their children" (12, p. 78), and she felt that "stringent measures" were needed

...to secure...an industrial education, as well as instruction in the common branches which will fit the Indian to earn his own living, cast from him the indolence of his race, and turning his back on the old mode of semi-barbarous life, push forward until he gain the height of civilization (12, p. 74).

Almost every agent found himself facing a problem in asserting authority. Compulsory education was suggested as a portion of the solution to the problem of getting greater control in order to contribute to the general welfare of both Whites and Indians.

In the years immediately following [1888], the reports of the agents are full of demands for authority to enforce compulsory education, to stamp out liquor consumption and eloquent statements on the duty of the Indian Bureau toward its aboriginal charges (38, p. 73).

While some of the writers of the late 1800's deplored the lack of progress and education (as they saw it) among the Mesquakie, they were sympathetic and understanding. This was not true of all, however, and in an 1886 manuscript Indians were referred to as "slovenly, lazy, and bestial." There was much begging during this pre-twentieth century period and little real contact with Whites save for traders and spectators at dances given during celebrations. Wealthy and/or influential Whites were most unimpressed by what they saw of Indian culture. "They are scavengers for the whole country round," getting carcasses killed by the cars (railroad), buying hogs left to die by shippers and picking up dead animals. "It is enough if the festering carcass will hold together sufficient to allow handling and carrying..." (51, pp. 6-7). To Whites, the size of the pony herd was ridiculous. Able-bodied males supported by the "labor of squaws" was an anathema. Many pointed out that after a period of some three or four decades the condition of the Indians was worsening. Recommendations were made for the use of force where necessary, systems of passes for Indians to prevent wandering, and a government trader to enforce strict regulations to control the purchases

of food and supplies (51, p. 10).

The writers of this time, most connected with the Mesquakie in some direct fashion, were agreed on one matter. "The one great obstacle to their improvement...is their persistent refusal to school themselves" (51, p. 7). As early as 1871 Major Clark (first agent for the settlement) and various pastors of churches had been exploring ways to civilize and educate the Indians. The point was made that it was foolish to send money abroad (foreign missions) when "here is a field 'white with harvest'" (Tama County Republican Newspaper of January 26, 1871 in 93, B 1848). By mid-1890 the white community of Tama-Toledo was ready to bring on the education of the Mesquakie whether the Mesquakie were ready for it or not.

#### The Background of the Boarding Schools

In 1879 the first Indian boarding school was begun in an old army barracks at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. One Richard Henry Pratt, in charge of Indian prisoners at Ft. Marion near St. Augustine, Florida, had taken off the shackles (literally) from the limbs of his charges and encouraged their productive labor. Finally the prisoners sold items to tourists, and some were placed in positions away from the fort to "work in industries about the town of St. Augustine." Pratt's success

with this group was "hailed in newspapers" and the ideas that led to the Indian boarding school system were begun (10, pp. 6-7).

Pratt appears to have been a good promoter, both with Whites and with Indians. After selling the idea of an Indian boarding school to his superiors (and getting appropriations for it) he traveled to such places as Pine Ridge and Rosebud in Dakota, trying with success to get important and discontented Indians to send their children to Carlisle where they would in essence serve as hostages. The aim of the boarding school was acculturation. "Pratt's ultimate aim was to see the native tribal life destroyed" (10, p. 23). At Carlisle the systems and ideas were developed that proved to be a model for most of the Indian boarding schools later developed in areas with substantial Indian populations.

Among the ideas evolved were these: one-half time for productive labor, one-half at studies; use of English or "Christian" names for students; the outing system in which students were placed away from the school itself, preferably living with white families and with jobs in agriculture or industry during this period away from the school; and (after most students at Carlisle began to learn Sioux as the most common Indian language) the rule of no "Indian" spoken--a somewhat cold-turkey approach to learning English which included the absence of interpreters. Given the goal at Carlisle

of assimilation of the Indian students into a white world, the school was a success and the regulations understandable. Most of those who left the school would be employed in trades, and thus their work at agriculture or carpentry in maintenance of the school would assist them when they left. The use of English names would be readily accepted by families with whom they would be placed as well as make it easier for their instructors at the school itself. While there were difficulties, the school was looked on with satisfaction, and other nonreservation schools were begun.

In 1884 additional non-reservation schools were established at Lawrence, Kansas; Chilocco, Oklahoma; and Genoa, Nebraska. A number of the employees in these new institutions had received their training at Carlisle (10, p. 85).

The first Mesquakie to attend Carlisle did not arrive there until 1913, but the results of the beginning of Carlisle and the success of it as a nonreservation boarding school reached the Mesquakie sooner as the demand for acculturation of the tribe increased along with the demand for stricter control of tribal members. Carlisle was a forerunner of the boarding school debacle of 1898 to 1910 at Toledo, Iowa.



The Toledo Boarding  
School

The establishment of an Indian Boarding school near Toledo for the education of the Mesquakie came in for some rather denigrating treatment later. For instance:

The authority of the United States Agent [Rebok] succeeded in 1898, in getting Fox children to school for the first time because he had those parents who objected put into jail (38, p. 136).

And indeed, reading of the events of the time from the vantage of the seventies (the excerpt was written circa 1950), the machinations used, the lawsuits, the lack of consideration for parents, and such things as jailing medicine men for practicing medicine without a license do appear uncalled for. But the white population near the settlement had some reason for concern, especially in the light of the beliefs current at the turn of the century. The Christianization of the tribe, looked at them as a matter of prime importance, had made practically no headway, though a Presbyterian mission had been begun in 1891. About 1888 a "group of Tama citizens petitioned Congress to remove the Fox to Indian Territory" [Oklahoma] (38, pp. 72-73). Annuities were being held up at that time in a government move to force the Mesquakie to return to the control of the federal government on a reservation (26, p. 5), and this lack of money on the part of the Indians may have been a prime motivating factor for such

action. Problems arose from the odd status of the Mesquakie. While they had an agent appointed by the federal government, they were on their own ground and under state law, and federal authority was questioned. "Hostile members of the tribe who did not approve of the course of the agent at times would order him from the ground and even attempt to enforce their demand" (26, p. 6).

Horace Rebok, publisher of a local newspaper, was the nucleus of the movement to develop more forceful and successful efforts to educate the Mesquakie, and in October of 1894 he became federal agent for the tribe. He moved with rapidity and singleness of purpose.

Some elaboration of the problems faced by Rebok in his relations with the Mesquakie of the 1890's is necessary. The wickiup as a residence was common. Dealings with tribal members were through interpreters for the most part. W. R. Lesser, agent prior to Rebok's takeover, had refused to try to pick judges for an Indian court.

This band of Indians is controlled by about 10 persons who have all the say and whose words are law, in a measure. To select judges from them would accomplish nothing, nor do I think they would understand the meaning of jurisdiction of the office. To select judges from outside the chieftainship would be an impossibility, because the Indians would be afraid to act (45, p. 113, a footnote from Lesser's AR).

Pushetonequa, one of the most enlightened of the tribe and "one of the few instances in the camp where a man past middle

life (Pushetonequa was 50 in 1892) is living with his first wife" (83, p. 49), could read and write, but in Mesquakie only. His English was described as "broken." A sample of the kind of speech current with tribal members of this period was recorded by Rebok on a train ride to an exposition at Omaha in 1898.

Ride all over here, pony. No fences, no timber, Coon River to Missouri. Thirty-seven years ago me camp here, kill deer, eat 'em (83, p. 58).

Just prior to Rebok's term as agent, a sum of \$5,000 had been voted by Congress for the enlargement of the day school or the replacement of it on the settlement grounds. Agent Lesser had submitted plans for the school with an estimated cost of \$3,528. This figure included provisions for quarters for two families, the farmer's and the teacher's, "and other employees, besides giving ample room for school and industrial purposes." Lesser recommended that the school be on Indian land so that it would be a "practical illustration every day to the Indians" (26, p. 8). Lesser retired in September, but no action had been taken on the proposal. Rebok, beginning in October, worked for about a month to get the replacement (or renovation) of the day school underway. He urged acceptance of Lesser's plans. When these were rejected he submitted his own revised plans.

But early in November Rebok met a problem. "The Indians had refused their consent to the erection of the new building

on their land or the improvement of the old premises" (26, p. 9). Though in the opinion of one commissioner, "The Indians have nothing to say in the matter," Rebok doubtless felt chagrined. The \$5,000 reverted to the treasury, and an industrial school was begun at the original school building in January of 1896 with some improvement over former conditions (see above). Rebok's efforts toward a much more complete filling of his expectations continued as illustrated by the following, taken from his report of June 8, 1895.

We may as well conclude to take the short cut on the problem in the beginning and to say that nothing short of a boarding school that will accommodate about 110 pupils, well supported, well supervised, and with authority, if necessary, to enforce police regulations, will accomplish the end. We have here today the worst problem to deal with that the Department finds among any of the Indians of the states. We have to break the power and influence of the chiefs and medicine men before there will be any marked progress in the tribe. That cannot be done by the methods of a day school. If there is no authority for the exercise of police regulations among these people, that authority will have to be created. I doubt if such authority now exists (26, p. 12).

Rebok also mentioned that he felt that the Indians had had legal counsel to the effect that they could not be forced to send their children to school. He mentioned the visit "a week ago" of "Dr. Chas. A. Eastman of St. Paul with us" (for a fuller indication of who Mr. Eastman is see below), who had given the benefit of "his observations, experience and judgement as applied to the situation," and concluded that "a

boarding school is the only solution at this Agency." The Superintendent of Indian Schools shortly replied that he had determined to "leave nothing undone" to secure a boarding school at the Tama agency (26, p. 13).

#### Getting support for the school

In July of 1895 Eastman had come to Tama from St. Paul at Rebok's request. He seems to have been selected because he was a Christian, a college graduate and a Sioux Indian. One of the less than one hundred Indians enrolled at Dartmouth since its founding in 1769, he had graduated in 1887 and later married Elaine Goodale who had been appointed the first supervisor of Indian Schools in 1890. He was an acculturated, assimilated, educated Indian who had come from reservation to prominence in the white world. He was a living illustration of what could be done in a generation. Dr. Eastman impressed the congregations of Whites who listened to him. The Mesquakie were unimpressed (he addressed them on Saturday and the Whites on Sunday), and some were openly scornful. Eastman seems to have served the purpose of convincing the Whites who wished to educate the Indians with all deliberate speed that they were thoroughly justified in their endeavors. As indicated above, he gave what influence he could to the formation of an Indian boarding school in preference to attempting a day school on the reservation (1, p. 20, 26, 55, pp. 10-12; 14, p. 35).

Through the efforts of Rebok and the appearance of Eastman in the communities of Toledo and Tama, the Indian Rights Organization was formed. While the group included no Indians, it was formed of many of the educated and influential men in the communities, including ministers, a district judge, and a college professor from Western College (in Toledo) and one E. E. Ebersole, who acted as the college's legal counsel (98, p. 145). This was an intelligent, active, and probably well-meaning group of people. In putting through legislation they were assisted by U.S. Senator Allison of Dubuque, whose reputation is relatively impeccable. Holding their first meetings in Tama and Toledo churches, the Indian Rights Association found that the problem of civilizing the Indians lay "in the line of Christianization and education" (26, p. 23).

The first problem facing the Indian Rights Organization was the legal status of the Mesquakie; a federal agent operating on territory under the jurisdiction of the state of Iowa had more than the usual problems. In August of 1895 Rebok, Reverend Sam Fellows (Methodist), and the Honorable J. R. Caldwell (Caldwell's 1910 history is a source for this work) met with Senator Allison at Dubuque. After careful questioning, Allison promised his support of the efforts of Rebok and the organization (14, p. 36). Legislation was passed in February of 1896 in the Iowa legislature which ceded to the

federal government "exclusive jurisdiction over the Sac and Fox Indians residing in Iowa." In June of the same year Congress approved the cession. At the same time they provided \$35,000 for the boarding school to be built "some four or five miles" from the Indian land (14, p. 46).

It doubtless appeared to the members of the Indian Rights Organization that they had accomplished a great deal. The Indians' refusal to have a school on their land had been by-passed. For seventy-five dollars an acre, ground near the town of Toledo was obtained. A political tiff over the location of the new facility between Tama and Toledo had been settled, and the then munificent sum of \$35,000 was about to enter the local economy. The legislative maneuvers by the state and federal governments in regard to the Mesquakie would "probably not settle all disputed points" over authority, but they pointed "the way for the exercise of federal authority by the agent in charge" (26, p. 13), and Rebok used his authority and persuasive powers as best he might to get the Mesquakie youth into the Toledo boarding school. A superintendent, one Mr. Nellis, was hired, and plans were made for opening the boarding school in the fall of 1898.

Rebok and Nellis went about the settlement, doing their best to drum up interest in the new school and trying to convince parents that it would be in the best interests of their children to send them there. Overall the two were received

well enough, but the consensus of the tribe was a polite, firm, negative response. They were at times denounced "for attempting to interfere with them [the Mesquakie] in living the life decreed to them by the Great Spirit and guaranteed to them in earlier times by the Government of the United States" (26, p. 17).

Rebok by this time had at his disposal three Indian police and a jail on the reservation as well as interpreters to deal with problems which arose. With resistance general throughout the tribe, pressure was brought on Pushetonequa. In one "council" [quotes mine] Rebok, Nellis, an interpreter, and three policemen were present. Here in the fall of 1898 Pushetonequa made a statement which became much quoted later (Almquist for instance), "...you may come and kill us, but we will not give you our children" (26, p. 17). A most approving attitude on the part of the interpreter at this point brought him a summons to appear before Rebok the following morning. The interpreter henceforth mended his ways. Rebok had clearly informed him that he was expected not only to cease opposition to the school but to work earnestly in its favor (26, p. 17).

Selling the tribe on the school remained a difficult matter. Over one hundred of them had refused the annuity payment in 1898 because they had been told (it is not clear by whom) that if they accepted it they would be giving the



government the right to place their children in the school. In November Rebok, Pushetonequa, and three council members made a trip to Washington. The Chief was offered five-hundred dollars annually and government recognition of his chieftainship in return for his cooperation in the school matter. The Commissioner also threatened to fill the boarding school with Winnebago if the Indians on the settlement did not take advantage of his offer (38, p. 74). In mid-December "the constant work with the chief and council had begun to bear fruit" (26, p. 17), and Pushetonequa declared support for the school in "open council," using his influence to get students to go. Prior to this time only seven pupils were at the school. Some of these were older pupils who came of their own accord, the first being a 19-year-old orphan boy. Also the captain of the police (Indian) had enrolled his eight year old boy and "an older daughter." General tribal opposition to these enrollments appears to have been almost universal.

With the chief, Pushetonequa, recognizing and supporting the boarding school, a few of the tribal members followed suit. Undoubtedly many looked on this action as a sell-out, though others (white) felt that the chief was simply yielding to his own best judgement but that

For this act he incurred the enmity and active opposition of many of his people and only the loyalty of the Government to this wise and progressive leader has saved to him his chieftainship among the Musquakies (83, p. 49).

The numbers coming from the chief's influence and those who felt that enrolling their children would help their standing with Rebok and keep their positions helped to a degree, but enrollment was still only in the vicinity of twenty. Rebok then petitioned the district court to declare guardians for a number of orphan children on the settlement.

This petition the court granted, naming the present Agent [Malin here, not Rebok] as guardian, and at the same time issuing an order that the children be put in the school provided for them. In this way during the year twenty pupils were secured (26, p. 17).

Probably feeling that the boarding school was on the way and that the procedures had been established for the general education of the Mesquakie, Rebok turned over the agency to Mr. Malin (the man who had been declared guardian of the "neglected" Mesquakie youth by the district court only the previous month) on January 27, 1899 (26, p. 18). It was also in January that Rebok had two medicine men, opponents of the school, arrested on a charge of practicing medicine without a license (38, p. 74). By the end of the school year in June, about fifty Mesquakie were enrolled at the school.

Efforts to cause the Indians to accept the school were continuous. Parents were invited to come and visit. They did, but they were not convinced. Employment was offered to

Indians on the farm and grounds of the school, and after enrollment rose in the winter of 1898-99, Indian assistants were hired by the superintendent, Nellis. But resignations were frequent and often early "owing to criticism and ridicule of the other Indians" (26, p. 16). Teachers (two), matrons, a seamstress, cook, laundress, carpenter and an industrial teacher were among the early employees of the school. While superintendent Nellis considered the results satisfactory enough, both classroom and industrial, he deplored the lack of a method to compel attendance at the school and hoped that Congress would pass enabling legislation so that Indian children on the settlement would attend:

...the schools provided for them. If compulsory education is justifiable anywhere it certainly is among the Indians, and nowhere more so than on the Sac and Fox Reservation of Iowa (26, p. 18).

Nellis felt that "many of the young people are anxious to attend school," but that they were "prevented from doing so by their parents and other relatives (26, pp. 15-16).

The industrial and agricultural aspects of the school seem to have had ample attention. Some seventeen acres of ground were under cultivation by the school "farmer," and 250 fruit trees had been set out prior to the opening of the school in the fall of 1898. It was intended that the school employees would attend to the building of the "hog, poultry, and ice houses and root cellar" (26, pp. 15-16). From the

meagre attendance at the school, especially through the fall of 1898, it can be assumed that those projects proceeded on schedule.

While all was not accomplished as well as Rebok and Nellis would have desired and the school was certainly not accepted by the Mesquakie community, still it must have appeared hopeful to them in the summer of 1899. The school had made it through its first year. Attendance was improving through the use of the courts and the appointment of guardians. The home influence on the Indian children which had hampered education efforts in the past would be minimized in those who were now attending school. While the battle that Rebok had been carrying on (shared with agent Malin in 1899) was far from won it must have seemed to them to have bright prospects. There was the Indian police force and the jail on the reservation to furnish the control that had been lacking. The frustration coming from the attempts to educate the Mesquakie and bring them into the mainstream of American life as it manifested itself in the latter years of the nineteenth century must have seemed on the wane if not over. But the fall of 1899 was coming.

Court cases

From the friction and bitterness over the opening of the boarding school a series of court cases ensued. Most of these culminated in December of 1899 when a federal court ruled that one Le-lah-puc-ka-chee, a young woman of about eighteen, could not be forced to attend the boarding school without the express desire of her parents. This stemmed from an 1895 decision which had provided that no child could be sent from any Indian reservation without parental consent. And the Toledo school was all of four miles from the reservation (settlement). The law, of course, had been made and interpreted to prevent abuses in the filling of boarding schools hundreds of miles away from reservations, but due to the resistance of the tribe to having the building on their ground the boarding school was indeed "off reservation." This same decision further held that state courts had no jurisdiction to appoint a guardian for orphans or neglected Indian children. "When the news reached the Indians of the decision...the school was practically depopulated in a day" (14, p. 44), and only a small percentage of the Mesquakie of school age attended the school after that, although it was not officially closed until 1910.

Rebok and his backers had been "hoist with [their] own

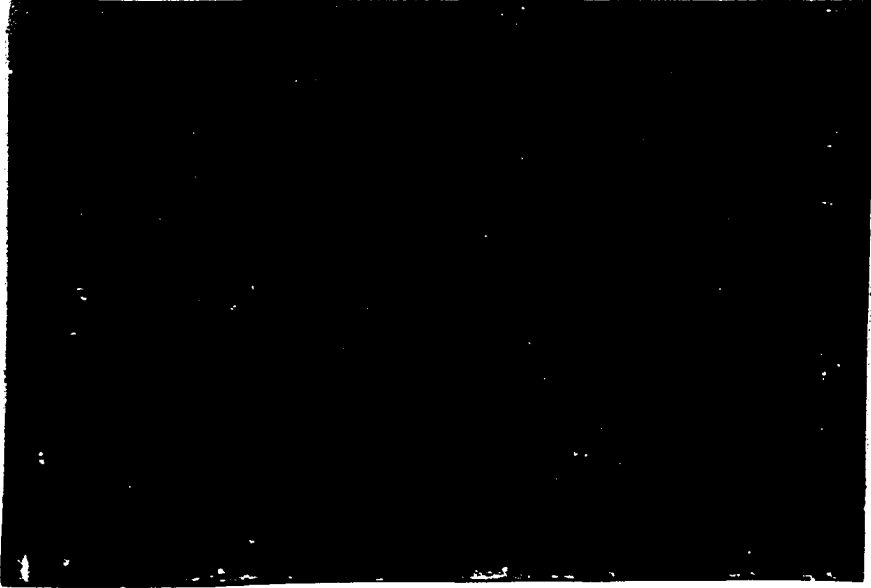


Figure 4. Cornerstone of the Toledo Boarding School



Figure 5. Toledo Boarding School building

petar."<sup>1</sup> In the effort to bring order and education to the settlement (on their terms of course), they had caused the jurisdiction of the tribe to be transferred to the federal government, and they had caused the school to be built off reservation in order to bypass the legal tangle arising from the Indians owning the settlement or reservation ground. Based on the situation evolving from these maneuvers, a kind of poetic justice resulted.

For a time of about ten years, 1900 to 1910, Mesquakie education as conceived by Whites was largely bypassed. The boarding school exodus and the court decisions that blocked further efforts to compel attendance effectively forestalled action. The students who attended were often from the families of the Indians in the employ of the government or perhaps members of families who were unable to give them the "three squares a day" that constituted an often ignored inducement to send a child to boarding school.<sup>2</sup>

It is tempting to register amusement at the efforts of the Indian Rights Organization, Mr. Rebok, Mr. Nellis, and Mr. Rebok's successor Mr. Malin. The methods of the boarding school, the subterfuges used to fill it, the bickering between two communities over the privilege of being nearest

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase is from Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act III, Scene iv, line 207, 2nd Quarto edition.

<sup>2</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

the associated payroll--these things make the overall effort appear a rather mean and shabby venture. But the men who went through the efforts to make the school a success seem to have meant well. Rebok was a highly educated man for his time. He had attended Western College at Toledo (Iowa) and had both a B.A. and an M.A. from Oberlin (1886 and 1893). In addition to fighting hard for the schooling not desired by the majority of the Mesquakie, he often defended the tribe in his paper. In a February 1898 issue of the Tama Democrat he urged Indian creditors to see Indians as individuals rather than "flocking around the Indian camp on payday [the day that annuity payments were distributed] and each pressing his claim." He felt that the time had come "when the Indian should be dealt with on the same plane as white men" (93, p. 1863). When a change in administration took the position of agent away from Rebok and gave it to Malin, he facilitated the transition by getting Malin named guardian of the "neglected" and orphan children he felt would best be served by the boarding school. Like agent John Beach of the 1840's, he had considerable "assistance" in his dealings with the tribe. He suggested in his paper that one "Wilcox" from Montour did the Indians little good with his meddling and in reality wished to be agent himself (93, pp. 1871-72). Court trials continued for Rebok as he and Malin were sued by Le-lah-puc-ka-chee for false imprisonment. This time a federal judge ruled that the boarding



school, only a few miles from the settlement, should be treated as a reservation school. This should have given some satisfaction to Rebok who soon moved to California to become a public school superintendent (14, p. 1016).

The decision went in favor of Malin and Rebok on the false imprisonment charge and "the litigation ceased from that time on" (14, p. 52). The boarding school had been defeated though it took another decade for it to die completely. The position of the Mesquakie legally was still best described as "anomalous" (not the writer's term, but the reference is lost). While the Mesquakie living on the settlement were not to receive voting citizenship till 1924 they had had their rights protected under the constitution, though perhaps not to the degree they would have preferred.

The problem of jurisdiction between state and federal government in relation to the tribe was to continue for at least another 75 years. Those who had fought hardest against the boarding school and "education" had been, for the time being, successful. Jim Peters, who had to spend nine days in the settlement jail for hauling away two children who had fled the school, might have felt some satisfaction with the turn of events. It had been a tough contest for both "sides," and in addition to the bitterness that came between Indian and White, the "progressive" or "Youngbear" group and the "conser-

vative" or "Oldbear" group were split on the issue (the progressives favoring education and learning white ways and the conservatives favoring avoidance of education and white ways). The battle of the boarding school had placed a division in the tribe which was to last until the present time (1973).

#### Maintaining the boarding school

The Toledo Boarding School continued in operation through 1910. For a time after 1900 and during the series of court decisions which had largely stopped the attendance of the students without parental consent, pupils were sent in from other areas. Only some twenty-five were enrolled through the 1900-1901 school year prior to the beginning of the practice of importing children from other areas, and many among these twenty-five were runaway and discipline problems. If things did not proceed to suit a student's "royal pleasure" he might well leave and return only on condition that what he found unpleasant had been removed. But the school did continue despite the irksome "concessions" that had to be made, and despite "a lack of large boys" [for field work] crops did fairly well (3, Malin, 1901, p. 240).

In the year 1901-1902, pupils were brought in from outside the settlement, and agent Malin was able to report the school filled to "its capacity of 80 pupils." The school stressed industrial training and more particularly agricul-

tural training for the boys. Girls were shown how to care for milk and butter, and homemaking was stressed. Both boys and girls assisted in large measure in the running of the plant and farm, and in the making of clothes, doing of laundry and preparation of food. But despite the continued operation of the school, runaways were a constant problem, particularly among the Sac and Fox children. Visitors seem to have been constant, so that those operating the school felt "almost besieged" at times, and "addresses" [speeches] seem to have been a feature of many of these visits. The school escaped a smallpox epidemic which broke out on the settlement in 1901 [see page 182 of this thesis] and had a typhoid scare in 1905. During the latter Malin pleaded for the removal of water closets and lavatories from the interior of the building, feeling that those "plague spots" might have been a source of the typhoid problem.

The settlement received a number of Indian visitors who reinforced the anti-school views of many of the residents, and some of those visitors came specifically to the settlement in order to keep their children out of school. Malin, headquartered in his position as agent at the boarding school and acting as both agent and superintendent by 1905, maintained a positive stance in his yearly reports. In 1906 he took great pains to point out that "Fully 25 per cent [about 21] of the available children of school age" on the settlement

were enrolled in the school and that three of this number had consented to be transferred to other schools [boarding schools like Haskell] where facilities would lead to better trades. In the previous year he requested an additional eighty acres of land (for farm ground) and recommended that the capacity of the school be increased to 200. But the "stolid indifference" of the Mesquakie which replaced the "violent opposition" was to prevail (3, Malin, 1906, p. 236; 1905, p. 221).

The effect of the operation of the school on local economies can perhaps be appreciated by mentioning that the Indian Training School at Toledo used 10,000 pounds of flour in 1902 (3, Malin, 1902, p. 215). The increase in size desired by Malin in 1905 can be looked on as having a basis other than the betterment of Mesquakie educational opportunity or, for that matter, Indian education in general. In the early 1900s there was competition for numbers among the various boarding schools. Men from the schools went on the road and tried to keep their home plants filled.

A Mr. Plairs, Haskell superintendent in 1906, tried to make the situation clear in his annual report. He mentioned that at one agency a Haskell man met representatives from Carlisle, Flandreau, Chilocco, Genoa, Morris, and Pipestone. All of these boarding schools had essentially the same offerings, though Haskell was intended for the more advanced stu-

dents. "In many instances the representatives were compelled to accept undesirable pupils or go away without any." In addition, superintendents of the reservation schools often kept the good pupils at the home schools, ignoring what the students perhaps needed, and making efforts to ameliorate conditions by keeping the best and sending the problems away (3, Plairs 1906, p. 237). It can be assumed that the information in Plairs' report was more direct than most and that most other reports were more sanguine than candid. Thus in Superintendent O'Dell's 1903 portion of Malin's Annual Report one finds "Those in regular attendance [emphasis mine] have made wonderful progress" and the year ending in June was indicated as the most satisfactory to date. The matter of not getting clear and candid reports appears to be a continual hazard and perhaps can be understood if not condoned (3, Malin, 1903, p. 237).<sup>1</sup>

#### Eventual close of the boarding school

The boarding school ceased operation in 1911. In 1908-1909 the Mesquakie Day School (located at the site of the original day school, remodeled for a manual arts school in 1895 and again for a residence for a "farmer" in 1902) opened and managed an enrollment of 17 and an average daily attendance of 3. Perhaps those who would have tended to be present regularly were already at the boarding

<sup>1</sup>George Youngbera, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

school. The boarding school had an average enrollment of 66 and an average attendance of 50 for the years of 1907-1908 and 1908-1909. There is no definite indication in the reports, but it is assumed that the larger portion of those remaining at the boarding school were non-Mesquakie.

In the spring and summer of 1911 the Fox Day School was erected near (within 100 yards) the site of the present-day Sac and Fox school and agency (erected 1937-1938) and a new approach to settlement education was begun. A school was maintained at the site of the old boarding school for patients in the sanatorium which began operations in 1912. This sanatorium school was held in a brick, two story building, originally built for a commissary in 1898. The former main building of the boarding school became the residence of tubercular patients, some few of whom may have been Mesquakie, but the Toledo boarding school was ended. The plan of Rebok, Eastman, Caldwell and others to bring the Mesquakie into the full flower of white civilization through a model boarding school was at an end (11).

Settlement Schools Following the  
Toledo Boarding School

The Sanatorium Day School

With the closing of the boarding school near Toledo, the educational provisions for the Mesquakie at the settlement were transferred largely to two day schools. These were the Mesquakie Day School and the Fox Day School. These both were operational into the 1930s, occupying sites within the settlement itself. "By 1926," however, another "school was also being operated for patients at the Sac and Fox Sanatorium" (77)--a majority of these being under twenty-one.

The number of Mesquakie who attended the school at the sanatorium is unclear, though two are listed as students there in 1924 and none through 1925-1930 (53, p. 65). A manual training department in a separate building was in operation in connection with this school in the thirties. The staff of the school in the thirties seems to have been two. This sanatorium day school appears to have operated until the closing of the sanatorium in 1942. The main building of this school was a "two story brick building, 22 x 39 feet." This was originally built in 1898 "for a commissary but later remodeled and used for a schoolhouse" (59, (from a report by Ira B. Nelson, Superintendent)), seemingly in the early twenties.

The sanatorium school was not a major portion of Mesquakie education. It was a part of the complex where the superintendent's office was located (the superintendent was also agent for the tribe at this time), and probably contributed more to the economy of Toledo than it did to Mesquakie education since few tribal members appear to have attended it. The sanatorium's employees and two school employees received (in the thirties) nearly \$40,000 in salaries, and "other expenditures" exceeded \$35,000 (11; 60, p. 7).

After the 1942 closing of the area, the sanatorium area became: a camp for Italian World War II prisoners, a factory, and finally a central apartment complex in a section of Toledo called Toledo Heights, in which status it rests today (1973). It was the location of agency headquarters for the B. I. A. from the time of the erection of the boarding school until the closing of the sanatorium which replaced it. The grounds of the sanatorium (circa 70 acres) were finally sold to the city of Toledo, having first been offered to the Mesquakie tribe (which declined the offer). A hospital had been built there for the tribe in 1931. This closed in 1942 along with the sanatorium (60, p. 7).



### The Mesquakie Day School

The Mesquakie Day School was begun in 1909 at the site of the original 1875 school which had been used for council meetings and government farmer's residence in addition to sporadic use as a school. This building had been repaired, or added onto at a cost of \$400. The "Buildings at Mesquakie in 1915 consisted of the teacher's residence, old shop [run by Stoops prior to opening of the boarding school in 1898], old jail, and a dilapidated barn." There appears to have been difficulty in obtaining legal rights to the land on which the school was located (the legal position of the Sac and Fox of Iowa is "anomalous" right up to and into 1973--the confusion compounded by their having legal title to the land), but in 1919 "It was decided to acquire" the land for the school (it had been in limbo as it were since 1908) "by condemnation proceedings, which was done." This completed an action begun some eleven years before. "In 1920 the old buildings [those of the Mesquakie day school, portions first erected in 1875] were destroyed by fire." Some \$25,000 was provided for the construction of a new plant to house Mesquakie Day School in 1921. This day school did not close until 1938 when the Sac and Fox Consolidated Day School began its operation (11). The 1921 plant increased the capacity of the Mesquakie Day School from a listed 30 (up from the original figure of 20 in 1909) to over



Figure 6. The Mesquakie Day School building



Figure 7. The Fox Day School building

40 (3, Breid, 1922). With the closing of Fox Day School in 1931, Mesquakie Day School remained the single school in operation on the settlement till the opening of the large consolidated school in 1938. Used briefly by the short-lived Legion post of the Indian veterans of World War II, it currently contains apartments for Indian families on the settlement.

#### The Fox Day School

The Fox Day School operated continually from 1911 to 1930. At this time a decision was reached to send Mesquakie upper elementary students to Montour schools. When this proved unpopular over the next several years, Fox School was used sporadically. It was last used as a school in 1937 prior to the opening of the present settlement school in 1938. The building remained and was used for storage and other nonscholastic purposes until it was burned during a school policy crisis in 1951. All that currently remains is a slight depression in the ground. The residence that had been built for the teacher continued in use as a home for teachers and later for the home of the Bureau representative until the late 1960s. It currently (1973) rests on timbers and barrels (awaiting transport or dismantlement) on a nonsettlement piece of ground east of the present Presbyterian Mesquakie Church building. Visible from the gravel

road that passes the mission, it is the last of the settlement buildings to be used as permanent residences by government employees.

The operation of the day schools

Considerable insight into the operation of the day schools on the settlement can be gained from work found in a 1930 study by Ben Jones over forty years ago (53). In an interview with a government teacher at Mesquakie School the degree of influence manifested by the government on curricular concerns is immediately evident.

We followed in-so-far as possible the course of study supplied us by the government which included instruction in reading, spelling, arithmetic, language, history, and civics. In the past the Indian Bureau sent out final examinations in all studies for each grade at the end of the year. In 1928 this plan was dropped and now each class room teacher makes out his own list of questions in each subject which must be submitted to the district supervisor, before they are administered (53, pp. 62-65 [Interview with H. E. Fox]).

The language barrier is currently a great problem for Mesquakie children, with over one-half having essentially no English when they arrive at school for the first time. But through 1930 "without exception" [emphasis mine] children "enter school...with no knowledge of the English language" (53, pp. 62-65).

By the latter part of the second year in school [emphasis mine] the average child can understand practically all that the teacher would have occasion

to tell him. I would sometimes write simple sentences on the board such as "ring the bell" or "stand on the chair", and tell certain of the younger students to read the sentence and then do what it said. Without exception and very quickly they would respond (53, pp. 62-65)

An understanding of Indian culture that most people still learn individually (as did the writer) and often far more evident to staffs in Indian schools<sup>1</sup> was in evidence in 1930 in the day schools on the settlement.

...if one is unfamiliar with Indian children it appears that they are very slow and stubborn. This is incorrect as it is characteristic of the Indian's nature to stand still and take plenty of time before they answer any question put to them. If, in your hurry to get an answer you put several questions at them in succession, your purpose will be completely lost. Invariably you will receive no answer (53, pp. 62-65).

To the teacher in the decades of the day school period of the 1910s and 1920s, Indian students as a group appeared "lower in mentality than white children" although much of the "apparent difference is artificial" because of the language barrier. The "little chap in my school [who] could hold his own in any public school with Whites of his own age" was considered an exception (53, pp. 62-65).

The attendance problem which has plagued Indian education (White variety) from the first efforts continued during the period of the day schools, though not as much resistance

<sup>1</sup>John Downs, Haskell. Personal interview. 1973.

was exhibited as had been evidenced in the boarding school period.

We served a good meal at noon to these children and I am sure it was the one big factor that maintained our attendance average. Not all the Indian children however would take advantage of this meal. Some of the children who lived close to the school would go home. There is still much indifference toward education on the reservation today and the majority of the children are quite indifferent to success in their school work. There are some families who need no urging to send their children to school. Our attendance was very irregular yet in 1927 we had seven children in both schools who did not miss a day (53, pp. 62-65).

One more look at the day schools is furnished in Jones' work by the following interview with the Tama County Superintendent of Schools in 1929.

There were fifteen to twenty children in attendance that morning and I received a pleasant surprise at their clean linens. All of the students wore clean clothes and their hair looked as if it had been scrubbed. They responded very readily to their teacher, did numbers quite well and revealed considerable knowledge of geography. They were however, quite timid and shy and balked all my efforts at conversation with blank silence. The equipment for teaching was not very plentiful and it is apparent that an especially trained teacher for this kind of work is essential. They ranged in age from about six to fourteen years and were classified in grades from One to Six, but all grades were not represented. The children were served a warm meal at noon, the equipment for that purpose being very good. It is my opinion that the attendance would have been less if this meal was not served (53, p. 62).

The operation of the Fox and Mesquakie Day Schools through 1930 could be considered a mild success. One must remember that the winter hunts continued into the twenties,

that large numbers of the young members of the settlement began school at ages of nine or later and that many had family responsibilities that precluded further schooling by age fifteen or less. As a working concept about one-half of the settlement's eligible members would be enrolled in one of the schools, and the average daily attendance would run about two-thirds of those enrolled. Thus about one-third of the Mesquakie received (in some form) the rudiments of primary education in the Fox and Mesquakie Day Schools (3, 1912-1930).

Teachers and agents during this period would have preferred better attendance and attempted to interest the children and to influence their parents to that end. But "We had no authority to compell the children to attend." A local agent tried to force attendance by "withholding annuities, but he was unsuccessful since he did not receive the support of the Indian Office" (53, pp. 62-65).

No industrial or vocational training of note took place in the day schools during the two decades when they represented education on the settlement. Large numbers of Mesquakie students did leave for government boarding schools, however, and received such training there, especially at Genoa, Nebraska, and Pipestone, Minnesota. From 1923 through 1926 the numbers at boarding schools from the settlement averaged 27, and from 1927 through 1930 the average was 44

(53, p. 65). It became Bureau policy "that all children over the third grade...be transferred to boarding school" where they would be able to receive vocational training. Practically no Mesquakie attended the public schools at this time. The number in attendance in public school from 1923 to 1930 peaked at 2 in 1927 and averaged less than 1 (53, p. 65). With a few rare exceptions the Mesquakie students from 1910 to 1930 either attended one of the day schools on the settlement or were sent to a government boarding school.

In the day schools of 1910 to 1930, as in the boarding schools, there was a prescribed course of study. One such prescribed course was implemented "in 1915, revised in 1922, and discontinued in 1931." Bringing Indian students to the point of fitting in with a white society was very much the mode. "The vocational aim was predominant, ...special emphasis was...given to agriculture and homemaking." But courses were not varied to suit conditions in different sections of the country, and so

The Indians at Tama were studying the same courses, methods of farming, theory of stock raising, and other items classified as education, as were the Indians near the Mexican border whose environment, both physical and cultural, was...different (13, p. 17).

How closely individual teachers adhered to the directions from the Bureau is a matter of speculation, but with visits



from supervisory personnel a portion of the school operation (56) it would seem that the Fox and Mesquakie Schools were probably very much a part of the prescribed system. Language must have presented immediate and lasting difficulty since "The Indian language was prohibited from use in the schools. Both teachers and students were required to think [?] and speak in English" (13, pp. 15-16). Specific times were allotted to courses and a somewhat rigorous system of conduct seemed to be in vogue. Even as late as 1937 a present day member of the settlement recalled day school as "like being in military service."<sup>1</sup>

The Change from the Day Schools to the Sac  
and Fox Consolidated School

With the publishing of the revealing Meriam Report in 1928, demands grew for Indian education which more closely resembled that of Whites and, where practical, for the attendance of Indian students at white schools. Prior to 1935 if an Indian student of the Tama settlement wished education beyond the offerings at the settlement he had to either go to a boarding school (the nearest was Pipestone, Minnesota) or manage tuition to attend in Tama. Many went to boarding schools, but few went to Tama High School. In the period of 1928-1934 a total of three Mesquakie

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<sup>1</sup>Frances Blackcloud, Tama. Personal interview. 1972.

students attended Tama High School. Of these one graduated (13, p. 19). The problem of the payment of tuition was probably a large factor in such a minor representation of the settlement students. In any event Tama High School (the public school nearest the settlement) was certainly a minor factor in Mesquakie education prior to 1935.

In 1931 the Government closed the Fox Day School and contracted with the Montour Board of Education to "furnish educational facilities for certain Indian children in return for tuition charges" (13, p. 18). There were no Indian signers to this agreement, and it appears to have been a decision made unilaterally by the Government. The arrangement, which appears to have been for the teaching of upper elementary students, proved to be a less than happy one.

On August 30, 1934, the Indians met en masse at the agency farmer's office, and passed resolutions against sending their children to the Montour schools until an agreement was reached between the tribe and the Government (13, p. 23).

The Indians objected to not being consulted and did not consider that the contract to send their children to the Montour schools was valid (13, p. 23). It seems a safe assumption that much more than principle was involved at this time. The protest came some years after the beginning of the Montour contract. In any event the Mesquakie students' attendance at Montour resulted in "a constant uproar which was the culmination of all the grievances the people

[the Mesquakie tribe] had" (65).

At a January, 1935 meeting the Mesquakie made four requests of the Government:

1. Not to leave them without schools but to have them built on the reservation.
2. To have "the course of study in the reservation schools be like, or nearly like, that advocated by the state."
3. A greater voice in educational matters.
4. "Government payment of tuition for the pupils to attend Tama High School" (13, p. 26).

The Government largely met the tribal requests. In May, 1935, \$600 was allotted to repair (for temporary use) "the old Fox School on the reservation" (13, p. 28). In October of the same year \$47,000 was allotted "for the building of a new three-room community center and school..." (13, p. 28). This building was built in due course and ready for occupancy by early 1938. It is currently the only school on the settlement and the location of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office for the settlement. Provision was made in 1935 for transportation of pupils to off-settlement schools, and also the government agreed to pay high school tuition for settlement students who wished to attend Tama High School.

It was government policy during the late thirties to involve settlement members on a scale unknown previously in school matters. "Mr. H. W. Benedict, Principal, was trans-

ferred to the local reservation [settlement] during the summer of 1935" (13, p. 30). Benedict immediately began to involve community members in school activities. Five Indians were on their local school board (whether or not there were other non-Indian members is unclear, though there must have been assistance). A local Indian band leader was invited to assist with music work at the school, and an Indian silversmith was invited to help with shop work in the Indian day schools on the settlement. Indians were invited to give talks on the history of the tribe, and a community operetta (whether in Mesquakie or English is not clear, though probably the latter) was presented with adults taking the leads and students supplying the choruses (13, pp. 30-31). The entire community including the missionary at the Presbyterian Mission (he helped with the operetta) seems to have been involved with the school. Benedict made home visits, and in 1937 he sponsored a community garden project. Food from this project was canned and eventually found its way into the school hot lunch program.

Thus it can be seen that throughout the thirties a major change took place in the educational structure of the settlement. From the two day schools with a rather restrictive curriculum, a consolidated school had evolved which eventually included eight grades. It was to become an integral portion of the Mesquakie community. Not only had it been

promoted through tribal members by Mr. Benedict, but it contained a community center within the building itself. Today it is the location of council meetings and other tribal affairs.

One way to get a concept of the change in the schooling opportunities that had taken place is to compare a statement of the twenties with one in the fifties. In the early twenties one author wrote: "there are five grades in the reservation school and after...this...they may go away to boarding school. Most who go, go to Pipestone, Minnesota." Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas was mentioned as a place where one might take a business course (66). Around 1950 another author indicated that "The children attended the early grades, pre-school through eighth, in a school of fine appearance and good reputation run by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs," or they went to the Junior or Senior high schools of Tama (39, p. 10). The school offerings on the settlement itself had increased from five (and later six) grades to eight. Schooling beyond the fifth or sixth grade could be had at the settlement school and at the junior and senior high schools of Tama. Boarding schools continued to be available and some Mesquakie students went to them, but it was now possible for a Mesquakie student to remain in the settlement community and to obtain schooling through high school without the often prohibitive

block of tuition payment.

While it is difficult to compare the quality of the settlement school with other schools since its population of students would be unique (those coming to school speaking Mesquakie being the rule not the exception), Whites were felt in general to have better schools (93, p. 1992). Factors such as low pay, lack of rapport with the non-Indian community (remarks were made against the pastor of the local Presbyterian mission by a principal) (93, p. 2147), and a large turnover of teachers who had little or no experience with Indian education (47, p. 54) contributed to the feeling that the Indian school was somehow inferior. In 1950 one young black teacher at the school did have good relations with the community as "a good athlete, pushing sports" (93, p. 2175).

The value of having a settlement school in operation was questioned by some public school administrators and others (2, p. 57). One of the obvious problems that arose was that of language. In the classroom English was the language used, but on the playground it was Mesquakie. One student, finishing sixth grade in 1957, didn't really become fluent in English until after that time. He felt that the teachers only worked with those who learned easily and mentioned that English was used only for responses to



Figure 8. The Sanatorium Day School building



Figure 9. The Sac and Fox Consolidated School from the site of the Fox Day School building

teachers.<sup>1</sup> In any event the government initiated a policy of closing out the settlement school. In 1956-1957, grades 7 and 8 were transferred to the South Tama Schools. In 1965-1965 grade 6 was closed out (transferred to South Tama). In 1967-1968 an attempt was made to completely close the school on the settlement (2, pp. 51-53). The Mesquakie took the matter to Federal court and obtained an injunction against the closing of the school. Since that time and until the present there have been four grades at the day school. The balance of the Mesquakie students who live at the settlement attend South Tama schools at Montour, Toledo, and Tama itself.

The Sac and Fox Consolidated School (it consolidated the Mesquakie and the Fox schools) was for the most part accepted by the Mesquakie. Attendance continued to be a problem, but by 1948 there was a "marked change in attitude" on the part of parents whose own attendance had been very poor when they were going to school. Student attitude was better at the consolidated school, and attendance had made a very definite improvement over that experienced prior to 1940 (65).<sup>2</sup> Education on the settlement was for the most part being encouraged rather than resisted. Efforts by the govern-

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Mitchell, Tama. Personal interview. 1972.

<sup>2</sup>From the source, a figure of 10% for an absentee rate seems justified.



ment to close the school, begun in 1950, have met resistance from the tribe and been forestalled by legal actions on their part. The current Sac and Fox Consolidated School, though down to the first four grades, is welcome and wanted on the Mesquakie settlement.

#### Changes Which Took Place over the Last Seventy Years

While the schools for the Mesquakie were being shaped over the last century, other events relevant to the topic were taking place.

Governmentally all Indians, regardless of their presence on a government reservation, were given voting rights in 1924. In November of that year seventy-seven on the Tama settlement voted (47, p. 257). While this might have seemed to some to have clarified legal matters, it did not. Treaties with the Indian "nations" including the Mesquakie still applied. Law and order has been an issue over the last century and continues today. One complicating factor in relation to the Mesquakie is their unique position of owning land in Iowa. While technically it is their land, school buses and mail routes run on "their" roads and compromises are worked out with county maintenance crews. A dam was built on the Iowa River and a mill race dug through the settlement in 1874. This supplied water power for the

Tama Paper Mill until the last several years (24). Two railroads and U.S. Highway 30 crossed the settlement in due course. Tribal land was (and still is) rented to Whites; power is supplied to homes; government services such as A.D.C. are supplied: all without a clear legal picture emerging. The federal officer in charge was physically attacked this year (1973). His assailants felt he had no right to be on tribal land if they wished him elsewhere. But while the legal bickering has continued over the century, the settlement has become very much a part of the total community.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 provided for the setting up of tribal governments. The Mesquakie took this route in 1937 by the meagre margin of two votes. The conservative faction of the tribe was largely opposed to the setting up of a tribal council which was elected formally rather than emerging as per tribal custom. When the reorganization of the tribe's governing structure was first established it was run by the liberal faction or "Youngbears," but over the years it has alternately been under the control of both factions (these groups seem to date from the beginning of the boarding school and to have continued ever since). Prior to 1937 the tribal government had been handled in traditional manner save that Pushetonequa, who died in 1919,

had been chief largely because the government of the United States recognized him as such and paid him a salary of \$500 per annum.

An Indian court was set up in 1941 in which testimony was to be given in Mesquakie. This was a short-lived experiment. The first case was for drunk and disorderly conduct. Information was also given that alleged that the defendant had said "he was for Hitler and that Germany was a better place to live than the U.S." The defendant first demanded a jury trial, changed his mind and was then sentenced to a \$5 fine or 10 days at hard labor. The court simply proved a failure (93, p. 1976). Even with assistance from the county attorney it was too much for the situation in the tribe at that time.

In the last seventy years housing on the settlement has changed from a time when most residents lived in wickiups to a point where the only wickiup present today is one constructed some four years ago as a portion of a tourist trading center just off present Highway 30. The situation as early as 1925 was one in which

Nearly all of the Indian families now have frame houses, though the native wickiups may still be seen, and the Meskwaki housewife has a few pieces of furniture like those in the modest homes of her white neighbors. Their clothing is usually the kind worn by white people, but selected and modified to suit Indians taste. Ten possess automobiles (37, pp. 257-258).

In the last ten years through programs and through settlements of claims in the millions of dollars, new though modest homes are appearing on the settlement and a deep well water system is about to become a reality (the water in the current school is not potable).

In 1920 the former Leander Clark College (formerly Western College but renamed for the first agent of the Sac and Fox of Iowa) where Horace Rebok had attended, became the State Juvenile Home. Some of the Mesquakie were to attend school there throughout the next fifty years. In 1922 a reforestation project was carried on by people from Ames at government request and now forms the great pines near the school (93, p. 1808). In World War II a number of Mesquakie were in the service and others took advantage of job opportunities which opened up as a result of war industry and the manpower shortage. A Legion Post was formed on the settlement following World War II and was short-lived, partially because of drinking regulations in operation at that time.

Today, automobiles and television are very much a part of the settlement scene. The country store, noted by the University of Chicago students as an integral part of the community in 1948, is gone and Highway 30 has been rerouted to the north. Drinking on and off the settlement has continued to be a major problem. The annual Pow Wow,

begun prior to 1920, has been and continues to be a major attraction for Indians and Whites and a source of significant revenue for the settlement.

This completes the historical background portion of the paper. The balance of the material will be presented using a topical approach.

## THE MESQUAKIE AND THE BOARDING SCHOOLS

Over the years literally hundreds of Mesquakie have attended boarding schools. Tribal members have attended government Boarding Schools since before the building of the Toledo boarding school described above and are still doing so at the present time. This is a facet of Mesquakie education that is little understood by most Whites, but names such as Haskell, Pipestone, and Flandreau are commonplace on the settlement. At the turn of the century there had been some consternation over sending children away from home to a strange environment on the part of Mesquakie parents. This had been one of the arguments put forth by the agent Rebok in favor of the Toledo Boarding School prior to its erection. An Indian from the Oklahoma Sac and Fox had come to the settlement "trying to get kids to go to Haskell" in 1894. Six had gone to Haskell, and a local boarding school had then seemed a good alternative (93, p. 312). The local boarding school proved most unpopular, but half a century later, despite the bitter experience in the local area and an atypical holding to traditional ways and the maintaining of the native language by the Mesquakie, the attitude toward boarding schools had undergone a considerable change.

I have noticed in general that people seem not to mind going away to school [boarding school], rather to like it. The percentage of people who have attended Indian schools must be amazing-

ly high. It seems to have affected their position in the Fox Community very little if at all, at least so far as this generation is concerned [the foregoing written about 1949] (93, p. 1520).

Today, a visitor to the boarding school located at Flandreau, South Dakota, will find himself in a physical area that closely resembles a small college campus. The grades taught there are high school equivalent, 9 through 12. Teacher certification standards are those that apply to teachers in the systems in the state of South Dakota. New buildings (built in the last 12 years) abound, and dormitories, dining hall and student lounge begin to surround an area of tennis courts and lawn. Most of the students are of high school age. It is only as one walks about and notes the windows of a former brick dairy barn filled with glass brick and notes that the building now is to be used as a mechanical arts area rather than a dairy and as one talks to a former student of the Flandreau of the 1920s that the changes which have taken place begin to make themselves evident.

#### Early Boarding School Problems

In the beginning of the boarding schools (a rash of these appeared in the 1880s) a major task of the students was contribution to the maintenance of the connected farm, and industrial courses were more fitted to the actual opera-

tion of the school than for providing trade skills which students could be expected to enter later in life.

Academic classwork consisted mainly of the teaching of reading, writing, and music. A major portion of the enrollees were adults on an elementary level...no effort was made to fit the material to the children being taught (27, p. 17).

It is perhaps easier to understand the formerly large number of adults in the boarding schools if one is reminded that many Indian students saw no school at all before the age of 12 and later. The writer talked to two Mesquakie men who had begun school at 9 and 11, both of whom attended boarding schools in the twenties. During the twenties the span of students at Flandreau ran from elementary school children to adults of thirty.<sup>1</sup> Such an age differential today would, of course, be unusual.

Early critics of the boarding schools were concerned about the amount of time spent by the students in nonacademic pursuits. The Meriam Report, coming out in 1928, was especially critical of labor by children (67, pp. 331-332). In addition to the labor on the farms and in the shops (wagons and harness were made at Haskell in the twenties (41, p. 42)) there was much to do in the area of general housekeeping and maintenance of facilities. "At the boarding schools students washed tons of clothing, made hundreds of beds, ironed and mended thousands of garments, cleaned barrack-

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Mitchell, Tama. Personal interview. 1972.



like dormitories..." (27, p. 14). One factor that added to the problem of maintenance and the labor involved on it was the emphasis by many boarding school superintendents on enrollment. In addition to overcrowding, many of the school buildings were ill-designed.

Classrooms and dormitories were kept habitable by much patching and by tireless patience of staffs and students. Most schools were equipped with crude toilets, leaky shower heads, dressing rooms with tiny individual lockers to keep children's personal belongings, and huge dormitories that were overcrowded (27, pp. 24-25).

Some schools took on 25 to 50 percent more enrollment than that recommended by the Bureau. Heads and feet were alternated in the rows of dormitory beds to cut down the spread of disease (more distance between mouths). There were no major disasters due to fire, but this seems to have been fortunate rather than deserved. Pipestone was cited as having a particularly bad fire hazard (67, p. 316). Haskell, in a 1932 study was found to have over 50 students for each toilet seat (27, pp. 24-25), and in 1927 toilet paper was used as towels due to an attempt to save on towels (67, p. 318).

A far-reaching problem faced by boarding schools was a general niggardliness in appropriations. The Meriam Report (1928) recommended the near doubling of expenditures to obtain qualified personnel for administration and instruction and also the near doubling of expenditures to assure

adequate and balanced diets for the Indian students in attendance. Evidence of malnutrition was often found (67, p. 330). Not only was food often poor, lacking vegetables and having milk in short supply, but preparation and serving were mediocre as well. Often the food was served cold because of excessive bell-ringing, blessing, and the maintenance of "a pathetic degree of quietness," (67, pp. 328-329). Also "no pasteurization of bottling plants were found in any of the schools" (67, p. 324). Just how much increased appropriations would have eliminated obvious deficiencies in health, educational and administrative conditions is a matter of conjecture, but had funds been more generous from the Congress of United States the opportunities for betterment would have been increased.

Until 1930 a feature of the boarding schools had been a system of military companies for the older boys and young men. Photographs of Mesquakie youth in the Toledo boarding school show them in uniforms resembling those currently in evidence at West Point. Perhaps the emphasis on military discipline came from the familiarity of Superintendent Pratt of Carlisle (the model for the boarding schools in most respects) with the military system. Pratt had even set up a kind of court martial for older students (10, p. 35). Corporal punishment and jails were a part of boarding school life for older students, the younger ones being

left largely in charge of matrons. Beatings and discipline from schools including Pipestone and Haskell are still recalled on the settlement (93, p. 157), and punishment for boys at the Toledo boarding school (closed circa 1910) included walking across cinders barefoot carrying a heavy timber over the shoulders until the feet bled (2, p. 48).

In a period of roughly eighty years a large degree of variation in operation of institutions such as boarding schools has been obvious and even expected, but perhaps some justification should be attempted for the military emphasis and somewhat cold and formalized system of the boarding schools in general use until 1930. The crowded conditions and divergent cultures represented would have needed some coherent force to maintain order, and imaginative personnel and top teachers were not in long supply at the schools. The Meriam Report, while recognizing a spectrum of conditions from near ideal to devastating, took a generally grim view of conditions in 1927 and looked on the task of the report as that of indicating

...what remains to be done to adjust the Indians to the prevailing civilization so that they may maintain themselves in the presence of that civilization according at least to a minimum standard of health and decency (67, viii and ix of the Introduction).

Large improvements in the general conditions prevalent at the boarding schools began to come with the appointment of Charles James Rhoads as Commissioner of Indian

Affairs in 1929. He obtained Joseph Scattergood as Assistant Commissioner and Will Ryan Jr. as Director of Indian Education. With the information provided by the Meriam Report and aroused public interest at their disposal, "These leaders placed children first." And as a result life became more humanized in the schools. Food became more adequate and better prepared. The jails and the military system were abolished along with corporal punishment. Parties and picnics were stepped up or, in some cases, initiated. Goosestepping also was done away with at this time. In general the boarding schools became a better place in which to live from 1930 on (27, pp. 49-50).

#### Athletics in Boarding Schools

A feature of many boarding schools over the years, certainly including Haskell, has been an emphasis on athletics. Perhaps this emphasis began with Carlisle, which at one time had two full-time agents who saw to it that ninety per cent of the Carlisle press notices concerned athletics (10, p. 76), or perhaps it came since "Mr. Haskell was a man of splendid physique, and very fond of athletic sports" (41, p.

21).<sup>1</sup> In any event interschool athletics has been very much a part of the nonreservation boarding school for over seventy years. Those who would justify such a publicized and competitive sports program such as the one featuring Jim Thorpe at Carlisle or the one which built a 15,000 seat stadium (the writer's estimate) at Haskell in the early twenties (at that time the largest in Kansas), would point to the need for publicity and the resultant obtaining of appropriations for the institution. It can also be presently said that athletics seems to be a major portion of American life and one that many Indians relate to very well indeed. Some who deplored this emphasis noted that "Practically no intramurals were offered" (27, p. 28). And others referred to the then three-year-old stadium at Haskell Institute as "the most pretentious of all" in reference to boarding school sport facilities (67, p. 326).

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<sup>1</sup>Carlisle's athletic "fund was drawn on for all athletic expenses, including the salaries of the coaches, officers of the organization, and the auditor of its books. In addition the fund was used for other athletic purposes. Cash loans of \$200 or \$300 at a time were advanced to certain football players, with the general understanding that the money would not be returned. Other players were paid a salary of \$10 to \$15 a month. In 1908 alone a total of \$4,283 was paid to football players from this fund. When the system of outright salaries was discontinued, each of the football players was given an overcoat and a suit of clothing each year. The fund also provided salaries for two publicity agents who advertised the school's athletics through chains of newspapers."

While some expenditures were nonathletic, most were. In 1914, Congress investigated and the superintendent was made directly responsible to government for funds expenditure (10, p. 69).

For many the fielding of athletic teams caused confusion as to the nature of the institutions involved. They were considered colleges. Carlisle offered no work beyond the tenth grade and Haskell Institute had only a few specialized post high school courses in the twenties. Athletes were often in their late twenties or early thirties, and the teams often prospered. In the late forties one Mesquakie youth transferred from Haskell to "Bacon" [Baconne] for fifteen dollars a month and room and board in return for playing football (93, p. 286). In 1973 Haskell Indian Community College had made few efforts at recruitment except in the case of athletes. One instructor explained to the writer the value of athletics as a cohesive force in the institution and the value of publicity, adding, "What we need is a Sonny Sixkiller"<sup>1</sup> [All-American quarterback (Indian), University of Washington, 1972]. It is to be hoped that athletics is a positive force in Indian boarding schools, for it seems destined to remain.

#### The Determination of Who is "Indian"

Attendance at Indian boarding schools was, and is, limited to "Indians." Just what constituted an Indian was bound to become a problem since as early as 1900 "full-bloods"

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<sup>1</sup>Bob Ritland, Haskell. Personal interview. 1973.

were becoming rare at boarding schools, as noted in this comment from the turn of the century.

The virus of our blood and poison of our still have left him a degenerate, and a full-blood is as highly prized among the pupils of an Indian school as a thoroughbred among a herd of bronchos (83, Introduction).

In 1914, a policy of one-quarter Indian blood or more was adapted as a prerequisite for entrance into an Indian boarding school (1, p. 14), and this policy remains in effect today. Obviously this is as impossible a concept as was the one-eighth negro blood legality that existed in Louisiana some decades back, but through tribal records and enrollments this position and procedure is maintained.

In treaty negotiations stemming from the original treaties with the "Sac and Fox" there are three groups mentioned: The Sac and Fox of Iowa, the Sac and Fox of the Missouri, and the Sac and Fox of Oklahoma. The Sac and Fox of Iowa are equivalent to the Mesquakie or Iowa Settlement group at Tama. The Sac and Fox of the Missouri are the remnants of the 1,500 who moved near St. Louis during the War of 1812. The Sac and Fox of Oklahoma are the descendents of those who moved from Kansas to Oklahoma in the mid-1800s. The "blood" listing of 1927 runs as follows:

	<u>Full Blood</u>	<u>Over 1/2</u>	<u>Under 1/2</u>
Iowa Sac and Fox [Mesquakie]	374	0	0
Kansas Sac and Fox [S&F Missouri]	0	12	84
Sac and Fox of Oklahoma	576	130	0

(88, p. 304)

Listing all 374 of the settlement members as full bloods in 1927 is ridiculous as shown by documentary and empirical evidence, but it is on such listings as the above that the one-quarter blood requirement for admission into boarding school is maintained.

One other matter relating to Indian ancestry needs to be mentioned. Indians are hired when possible for employment in boarding schools both as maintenance and supervisory personnel and as teachers, particularly in the trade areas. "In 1940 more than twenty-five percent of the teachers in Indian schools were one-fourth or more Indian blood and so were sixty percent of the Indian service employees (1, p. 93). These proportions have since increased. Many of these persons do not appear Indian, and currently it is something that has to be established. The writer was recently asked while at Haskell if he were an Indian [he is not], and one "one-quarter blood Cherokee" teacher currently at Haskell would not appear "Indian" in Marshalltown or Ames, Iowa. Thus boarding schools have Indians in evidence



(though many of these Indians obviously do not have predominantly Indian characteristics) throughout the spectrum of positions connected with the running of the institution.

The "Indianness" of the boarding schools has proved to be an attraction for many of the Mesquakie over the years. "At the boarding schools everyone there is an Indian. They're all like you" (93, p. 236). For some Mesquakie in the Tama schools there has been the problem of being different. A sudden silence when an Indian student recited in class was very disturbing (93, p. 236). Also at Indian schools general Indian cultural traits that stand out from white cultural traits will attract less notice. Few teachers in white schools are prepared for the several minutes of silence taken often by Indian students before they respond to a question (they usually are giving serious consideration to the question before they attempt an answer). Indian school classes would be less white culture oriented both because of the heavy emphasis on agriculture, home economics, and trades, and because with all the students sharing a nonwhite cultural background the teachers would naturally gravitate toward Indian cultural tendencies as a matter of course.

It is something of a paradox that the boarding schools, designed originally to assimilate Indians into a white cultural pattern while destroying the native cultures, should

have in fact become perpetrators of traditional Indian life and culture. Currently at both Haskell and Flandreau the visitor is impressed by Indian murals and art work very much in evidence and with streets and buildings named after famous Indians. Also the Indian who attends a boarding school is far more apt to become aware of Pan-Indian movements such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) and of Indian affairs in general than the Indian who attends the public schools in his local community.

#### Mesquakie and the Boarding Schools

Over the years the boarding schools have served the Mesquakie as a place where orphan children could be sent: also if a Mesquakie youth has difficulty in his local community the boarding school is a possible solution to the problem. Though the matter might not come up often in the seventies, the boarding school would also have solved the problem of poverty for some families. "Ten or a dozen families" on the settlement lived "in very reduced circumstances" in the early thirties, "Many of the families" being reduced to only "bread and coffee" (53, pp. 15-17). For those families who found themselves in such circumstances an opportunity to have a child or two fed and clothed and

looked after at no cost might well have seemed a blessing. The difficult or unwanted child is often another source of pupils for the boarding school (2, p. 63), and a substantial number sent to boarding schools from the Tama settlement fall into this category. Usually the student (currently most Mesquakie do not go to a boarding school before eighth grade) is sent to the nearest boarding school, Flandreau at this time. If Flandreau is full, then Chillocco, Oklahoma, is the next school tried.<sup>1</sup> It can be seen that for the settlement the boarding schools have acted as something of an escape valve for poverty conditions, unwanted or orphan children, and students who for various reasons don't fit in well in the community.

The curriculum at the boarding schools has come in for a great deal of negative criticism. Even after efforts were made to make it similar to public school programs it was written that "slavish copying of white curricula put Indian schools behind white educational programs" (28, pp. 20-21). Especially in the early years (prior to 1900) most instruction was "in the use of the English language and training in housework and the industrial arts" (41, p. 28). Gradually, new approaches and courses were added although student maintenance of the school plant and the school farms of

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

hundreds of acres continued until after World War II. Haskell had a business course and nurse's training in the 1920's, though this type of training would have been unusual for boarding schools. Most Mesquakie men who attended boarding schools returned to the settlement as painters and carpenters, though one at least was an accountant. The emphasis on trades and relatively unsophisticated courses can be better understood when the language barrier is recalled. Many Indian students spoke no English on arrival at the boarding schools and simply had "names bestowed" by staff members (41, p. 52; 56, p. 41). Gradually more courses were added so that high school was possible to complete at other schools than Haskell (some Mesquakie returned from boarding school to take their last two years at Tama High School in the thirties) and currently Haskell is in the process of becoming a Community College and seeking accreditation by the North Central Association.

There has also appeared in the last thirty years a kind of specialization among the boarding schools. One at Pierre, South Dakota takes students through the eighth grade, while Flandreau now has high school students only. A school of Indian art in New Mexico now has its second generation of Mesquakie students. But variety of courses and relative personal freedom are recent developments of boarding schools. The Meriam Report (1928) indicated that the routine

and direction in the boarding school tradition of that time did the opposite of what was desired and failed to make Indian students into people "who can take their place as independent citizens" (67, p. 351). The student who could attend boarding school and then move into further education in public schools and perhaps colleges was the exception rather than the rule.

Some indication of the numbers of settlement Indians who attended boarding schools can be seen in the following figures for 1926 (88, p. 323).

Eligible for enrollment [not familied, age 6 to 18]	109
Enrolled in Fox and Mesquakie Day Schools	72
Enrolled in schools outside the reservation [boarding schools]	27
Enrolled in public school	1
Eligible student not enrolled	9

Probably the figures indicating one-fourth of all Mesquakie students in boarding school is a workable figure to use as a high, but in the last six years about eight percent appears reasonable.<sup>1</sup>

In a settlement as small and closely knit (about 500 people on 3,500 acres) as the Tama settlement the boarding

<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

school is an integral part of life, known throughout the tribe for the last eighty years. One woman interviewed did not attend boarding school but her mother had gone to Flandreau "where they marched and drilled," her father had attended Haskell Institute (in the twenties) where he had learned to be a house-painter, and her son had left Haskell in the late sixties for Iowa State University because he felt the atmosphere at Haskell restrictive.<sup>1</sup>

A problem deriving from attendance at boarding schools by Indian students that appears in most sources is the cultural clash that occurs when boarding school pupils return to their Indian communities. In past years when a time of four years away from the reservation was usual, the language, and to a degree the life style, would be forgotten, and the returning student would often be subjected to scorn and ridicule (28, p. 10). While educational patterns aimed at remaking Indian students into citizens who would be accepted into white culture have been modified over the years, the patterns were still present in 1945 (1, Introduction) and present in the boarding schools of the seventies. The problems have undoubtedly lessened as more and more Indians on reservations have had "Sojourns outside the settlement, both among Whites and in Indian schools" [boarding schools

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<sup>1</sup>An interview with a settlement resident, 1973.

(the underlines are Brunel's)] which have contributed to acculturation (38, p. 235). The Mesquakie seem to have escaped any great difficulty in this regard. While mention was made of some settlement members who had gone to boarding school and failed to acquire either a white life style or an Indian approach to living,<sup>1</sup> no tribal quarrels of consequence seem to have resulted. Members of both Oldbear (conservative) and Youngbear (progressive) factions have attended schools such as Pipestone, Flandreau and Haskell. In addition the Tama settlement has had a prolonged period of close contact with white culture so that organizational patterns and values are understood if not always approved.

Great improvements were needed in early boarding schools when an Indian service inspector reported

The Indian Bureau has been made the dumping ground for the sweepings of the political party that is in power. I have found an abandoned woman in charge of an Indian school. I found a discharged lunatic in charge of another, and he was still there a year after I reported that fact...you find good earnest people...but they are the exception (88, pp. 72-76).

Conditions were really bad in that time before 1900. Reports were not accurate; employees discharged for incompetency, brutality, or immorality were often found reinstated or transferred to another school. There was large employee turnover. But while there had been great improve-

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<sup>1</sup>Lavern Seth, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

ments over the years, especially after the Meriam Report in 1928 was made public, still a Mesquakie man who had attended Pipestone in the late thirties said that it took him two years to get used to freedom again after he left that institution (93, p. 460). Some ten years ago at Haskell boys and girls (or young men and women) were allowed to go downtown in Lawrence, Kansas. But they went in segregated groups at different times and were to remain on the main thoroughfare of the city.<sup>1</sup> The boarding schools have liberalized and the turnover of personnel is less and their qualifications higher, but this appears to be a fairly recent phenomenon.

It should be mentioned that the more successful boarding school students would tend to settle away from their home territories. "The names of uncounted numbers of Indians who have found their way into contemporary life don't appear in government records" (1, p. 4). So perhaps success with life and environment that might be attributed to attendance at a boarding school, at least in part, has been somewhat ignored. Certainly the tasks of boarding school personnel have been difficult.

The institution of the off-reservation Indian boarding school has had a major impact on the Mesquakie. It has

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<sup>1</sup>Wallace E. Galluzzi, Haskell. Personal interview. 1973.



served some by teaching them a trade. It has furnished a kind of safety valve for economic and social difficulties on the settlement. Currently it is looked on as a very decent place to attend by Mesquakie youth, usually after grade eight, often being much preferred both in prospect and in actuality to school experiences in the South Tama School system.

## THE MESQUAKIE AND THE SCIENTISTS

As a tribal group somewhat isolated from other Indian tribes and as one which has maintained its native customs over the last centuries to a remarkable degree, the Mesquakie of Iowa have been the object of close scrutiny for well over 100 years. Much of the tribal lore is not meant to be distributed to the general public. This seems to have aroused the curiosity of investigators all the more. Starting near the turn of the century, their folklore began to be recorded. One tale of the creation of the beginning of the Mesquakie is found in Mary Owen's Folklore of the Musquakie ..., published in 1904. The first trained anthropologist, William Jones, visited the settlement "between 1897 and 1906" (38, p. 284) and in 1907 published Fox Texts which recorded in English and Mesquakie stories which are a part of Fox culture in which mythology, and witchcraft intermingle freely with reality (54, pp. 41-67). One Duren Ward assembled a definitive genealogy of the inhabitants of "Meskwakia" in 1905. He had considerable assistance from the missionaries at the Presbyterian mission, the then current agent, Mr. Malin, the tribal secretary (Cha ka ta ko si [see Bibliography]), the tribal interpreter, other Indians and "numerous heads of families" (97, p. 194). Ward also took pains to lay preliminary groundwork by giving

dinner at the "Clifton House" (currently the Clifton Hotel), at that time the place to take guests to dine in Tama. Guests included Chief Pushetonequa, interpreter Joe Tesson, and former schoolteacher Mr. Stoops (96). In the twenties Truman Michelson obtained stories of the Mesquakie sacred packs and other materials by the pragmatic method of paying for information, largely to one Harry Lincoln, settlement resident, graduate harness-maker, and seemingly something of a tribal politician.

Others came including a mysterious "Critchen," a Scottish anthropologist who spent some years with the tribe, and Wisconsin native Huron H. Smith who compiled an Ethnobotany [a listing of herbs and medicines] of the Mesquakie Indians. Smith's "best informant" was one John MacIntosh, a renowned settlement medicine man in "five or six states" (89, pp. 180-181). Most of the scientists arriving at the settlement seem to have been well received, whether noted and from a Wisconsin university as was Smith or simply a student researching an M.A. at Iowa City as was Byrd [see Bibliography]. But a kind of culmination or perhaps inundation of the Mesquakie settlement with investigators began in 1948. This marked the arrival of students from the University of Chicago working on the "Fox Project" under the general direction of Sol Tax, an anthropology professor familiar with the Tama settlement since 1932.

The Chicago students (and later some from the University of Iowa) were there largely through the summers. Their individual efforts varied from a few months to a number of years and the records produced ran from works of a few pages to those running into hundreds of pages but "...at least a dozen students were heavily involved from 1948 until 1954" (38, p. 313). A few students were at the settlement or on the farm near it throughout the year and became quite active in affairs affecting the tribe, including the obtaining of scholarships for Indian students and assistance for tribal members in dealing with difficulties associated with the settlement school. In actual numbers at any one time a maximum of six students seems a workable figure. Substantial sums of money were obtained from foundations at various times (around \$100,000 in one instance for the financing of a scholarship program) to finance aspects of the "Fox Project" (38, pp. 324-330). Meetings were held to determine general policy, to ascertain what techniques and areas of research were most successful, and to in general coordinate a rather major investigation.

The reception of the University of Chicago students varied but Mesquakie ideas of what constituted a university scientist were very much in evidence.

I guess you professors don't believe in God. There was a man here once from the Smithsonian Institution. His name was Truman Michelson [1920-30]. He didn't believe in God--thought that men came from monkeys and fish (93, p. 7).

Michelson had left another memory. The man who had been his chief informant let the students know that he felt that some remuneration would be appropriate for the information that they were receiving. Others were less direct: one seemed "to be hinting sometimes for me to give her something material" (93, p. 58). But the one documented comment that most stood out was "Are you guys writing a thesis?" (93, p. 261).

The laudable effort to assist the Indians was always mentioned when the members of the Chicago group were asked what they were doing on the settlement. That they were there to help the Indians was true enough. Most of them felt very sympathetic toward the Mesquakie and were most understanding of their problems. But the overriding purpose that the student never lost sight of was the gathering of information, and much of this had a rather tenuous connection at best with helping the Mesquakie. Mention was made of a "tiny card in the hand" with a list of questions to use during interviews. The interviewing student had a different card for each interviewee ready prior to the interview. It was based on previous interviews and the pooling of information with other members of the Chicago party. "This card is so small I can carry it in the palm

of my hand, thus fooling the enemy completely" (93, p. 386). In another instance a wire recorder that had been on while a settlement man played songs into it was left on (without his knowledge) in order to more closely analyze his conversation after he had left. Admiration of party members who were good at getting information was expressed.

Bob Rietz is the slickest field worker I can imagine. He has more rapport...than all the rest of us combined...and he can think faster during a conversation than anyone I have seen and just as casually as breathing.

Members of the Chicago group used prevarication when it seemed to serve their purpose.

He asked me if I had been to Brookfield Zoo, I lied that I had since I didn't want to appear to be too dumb about Chicago. He mentioned the monkeys and asked me if I had seen the ape at Lincoln Park, what's his name? I lied that I had, but told the truth that his name was Bushman (93, p. 1757).

Two of the female scientists made a decision to represent themselves as married. It was felt that their rapport with mothers of the tribe would be enhanced, and that these mothers would thus relate more fully to them if they thought that the ladies shared the marital portion of life with them. One settlement lady "relaxed noticeably and seemed more friendly when I said I am married (this little lie has come in to be useful on more than one occasion)" (93, p. 1441). No immediate questions appear to have been

raised on the matter of misrepresentation to the Indians but rather consternation over "Davida and Grace's decision to be advertised as married...certainly hope we don't get caught out" (93, p. 1508).

Eventually, however, with the continuing exposure of the students to tribal members on a personal basis, some guilt feelings arose among members of the Chicago party. Acceptance came from some older people which was satisfying since the young were the more easily approached (93, p. 1345), but "It makes one feel that one is doing something dishonest by gaining personal confidence for impersonal and prying reasons." While interviewing "One tries to convince one's informants that one is really not prying only to make the prying more easy" (93, pp. 1330-1340). One party member simply left things out which an interviewee asked her "not to repeat" and further wrote "even if this whole enterprise amounts to an abuse of confidences, I will not abuse her confidence so directly" (93, p. 1538).

Both at the school and at the farm which was purchased eventually (circa 1950) so that contact could be maintained the year around, the Chicago students entered rather fully, into the life of the community. They attended religious ceremonies and feasts, one expressing disappointment in a lack of "visions" having taken a peyote button (93, p. 1541). Efforts were made at a renewal of the Indian band

and two of the party played trumpets at an evangelistic Christian Church which worked to get Indian converts. The fundamentalist doctrine and approach of the sermon proved hard listening for the young men from Chicago (93, p. 800). One of the veterans was active in the American Legion Post on the settlement. They attended ball games, went swimming, and helped build a wickiup with settlement residents as well as obtaining interviews and finding "three of those iron yoke-like things that you make cows stay in one place with" [stanchions] in the barn on the dilapidated farmstead. One female student spent the summer of 1953 from June 15 to September 20 at Tama and described her activities.

The first half of the summer was devoted mainly to participant observation of teen-age activities and to the establishment of rapport. I attended all community dances, Saturday evenings in town and ball games, took the girls swimming and went to de-tassel corn with them. I kept a daily journal and observed groupings among the girls and their attendance at various functions (38, p. 233).

Later on the writer of the above managed interviews with some thirty-six girls on the settlement. These seem to have gone well enough. "I found that my interest in learning the language was the most effective single means of establishing rapport. A few Mesquakie words worked wonders" (38, p. 233). It can be seen that in addition to assembling a rather massive amount of information on the Mesquakie that the Chicago student group became a part of the community as



well. A present day settlement resident, in the sixth grade when the Chicago group was present, remembers them as very pleasant people who took him and others swimming at Cherry Lake [the mill pond near the paper factory in Tama].

Some of the Chicago student group got rather smitten by Fox culture and would have liked to see it preserved (93, pp. 1662-1664).

How can I possibly describe \_\_\_\_\_? [Name removed]  
As sensitive? Poetic? All I can think of is that while he sat here playing the flute I felt that here was a person with whom I could say, 'Ethnology be damned. This is someone to have for a friend'  
...wonderful smile. Warm. Patient (93, p. 1388).

The kind of attitude exhibited above, probably intensified by anti-Indian sentiment experienced in Tama and Toledo and reaction to the somewhat lifeless Christianity presented on the settlement, perhaps helped swing the Chicago University students to a position of backing the Oldbear traditionalist group on most issues after they became involved in tribal politics. They seem to have ignored in some measure their own mass of culture, humor, and wit which would seem to be closed to the Mesquakie if the traditional ways of the tribe were maintained.

Almost from the inception of the "Fox Project" a policy of conscious interference was followed by the participating scholars. This conscious involvement, somewhat at odds with the traditional view of the scientist as observer and recorder

of what conditions are or seem to be, was given the alliterative title of "action anthropology" (38, pp. 1-2). In August of 1948 Sol Tax wrote to one of the students on the project

...it's up to us to educate the Fox to the possibilities to determine with them what would be the best end product and then to figure out ways and means and work with them for getting it (38, p. 33).

From here on the amount of manipulation without being open and candid about it with the people involved, namely the Mesquakie, grew. The original point or emphasis on the gathering of information was not lost, however, since by doing all this sort of thing, they would thus find out "about the social structure of the Fox..." (38, p. 34). By 1954, six years after the project's inception, "action anthropology" had reached a state that was both analytic and manipulative and one that had evolved into a conscious and formulated approach. To wit:

...how do we keep (C) and (A) from talking and/or saying the things they usually say? (38, p. 244).

We should expect continuing trouble with the (A) wing of the Youngbear group who basically want assimilation and who form the core of the Mission (38, p. 244).

And by 1957:

Minor crises continue to arise between the Fox and the government. Our Central Aim in these [crises (emphasis mine)] is continually to point up the unavoidable destructive effects of the current administration of Fox affairs by outsiders (38, p. 333).

In 1952 an attempt was made by the Indian Bureau to place the settlement school under the jurisdiction of the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction. This was in line with the policy of termination being emphasized at that time (38, pp. 198-199). This attempt (turned down eventually by the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction when they discovered that such a move was not the wish of the majority of settlement residents) brought the Bureau into something of a confrontation with Sol Tax and some of the project workers. Tax advised the Indians on the matter, and incidentally offered some mildly suspicious counsel in the obtaining of a school principal if one were desired.

You should make sure the Indian Office gives you as much money to run the school as they've been spending. [You, (the Indians) could] hire your own teachers...make you[r] own decisions [as to building an addition or not, and] if you want us, we'll help you get started...there are two students from U.C. [The University of Chicago] who would be good people for principal if you wanted them (93, p. 2239).

Later at a meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, of Indians, leading state citizens, Tax, and a Bureau spokesman, the Bureau man spoke out directly on the withdrawing of the federal running of the school, and then turned to other educational matters. Feeling that the Indians felt "chagrined and that it was necessary" to say something that would counteract "the feelings on the part of the Indians" that "the day was lost" (38, pp. 238-240), Tax spoke as follows:

...this policy of turning you into white men, I certainly do not agree with....

It is like your language; you can say anything in Mesquakie that it is possible to say in English. I think you should have the right to stay Mesquakie or to become like white men, whichever you choose (93, p. 2243).

And finally in reference to the above meeting, speaking to a project member:

I decided to get in a word to counteract the assumption they all seemed to be working under that assimilation is inevitable.... Counteracting this is going to be our biggest and most pressing job with the white community.... We'll definitely get the Friends [Quakers] working on this; they already think our way (93, pp. 2243-2245).

The point of the above quotations is to give an example of some of the problems that arose as the "policy" of the University of Chicago group came into conflict with the national policy of the Indian Bureau as officials of the Bureau tried to implement it. The people for the Bureau had been accustomed to using a rather abrupt procedure in the past, and they felt that the government was responsible for educational matters on the settlement. Tax was accused of "Muddying things up" (93, p. 2243), and when one considers the references he made to such things as turning Indians into white men and to the Indian language, both concerns of high emotional content for the Mesquakie, "Muddying up" appears a fairly accurate statement. This does not mean that Tax did a wrong thing. He undoubtedly felt sincerely

that the Fox needed a hand in decisions affecting them to a degree unthought of before. "Assistance" often does appear to have come too readily and too often to the Mesquakie, contributing little to heal the splits in the tribe, even when all the parties involved seemed to have meant well enough.

Not all of the actions of the Chicago anthropologists were as disturbing as the school incident. Attempts to find an industry which would fit tribal life resulted in Tamacraft [see below] which was a brief success. A program to get qualified Mesquakie into the professions by getting funds committed for their educations at colleges and universities was in progress during the spring of 1956 with a single Mesquakie student each at Iowa City, Cedar Falls, and Grinnell (38, pp. 324-330). An emphasis on better press for the Mesquakie brought more complaint from a member of the Chicago group than from any place else. The objection was to the lack of scientific method and integrity in publications of the Chicago group designed to reformulate white beliefs about the Mesquakie (38, p. 236).

Not all the settlement took kindly to the inquisitiveness of the Chicago visitors. Sometimes the students were asked what kinds of things they had learned about the Indians so that they "could tell other people about them" (93, p. 59). Interviews with mothers brought a similar

question. "Just what are you after? Do you want to ask about intelligence?" (93, p. 1132). Some of the hostility to questions may have been covert. Drunkenness brought out comments such as "There's two of us whose mind you haven't read.... You haven't got anything from us. We're too smart for you." And, in reference to the greater degree of hair exhibited by whites on body and arms, "I'm not like an ape" (93, p. 1695). One more example should suffice. This came from a Mesquakie man angry over a misunderstanding about the tearing down of a chicken coop located on the farmstead where the Chicago students lived.

You people are white anyway you think you can just come here and do anything you want to and make us look like fools and ask alot [sic] of fool questions and then go away and write books and make alot of money making fools of us (etc.) (93, p. 213).

One aspect driven home by the study of the Sol Tax group was the tremendous diversity of language and cultural assimilation evident among the settlement population. Some of the residents had difficulty discussing topics because of the language barrier. Simple topics only could be discussed and English word meanings differed from generally accepted white meanings. For instance one settlement man "used the words 'ask,' 'tell,' and 'told' interchangeably" (93, pp. 31-37).

...\_\_\_\_\_ was sitting alone on a log. His English is wretched and we chatted about such prosaic topics as the spring flood which had forced him to move from the bottoms up onto the hill (93, p. 1333).

The Indians themselves suggested interpreters on occasion, especially in the case of some of the older residents. On the other hand another resident near the same age of the man who spoke of the spring flood was quite another matter. He had attended Carlisle, Haskell (1920-23), and Tama High School. He was described as "well educated, very articulate, highly acculturated." This commentary by a University of Chicago student on a man who had begun school at the age of eleven (93, pp. 72-75). Some of the Mesquakie picked up techniques from the Tax party and became masters "at parrying questions" (93, p. 282). One settlement member, a "clever and subtle person" who had "done more analysis of us than we of him," would ask the same questions of members of the Fox party on different days in order to test the consistency of their answers. Regardless of assimilation of white culture and language, no atmosphere of complete trust seems to have developed between members of the Tax party and settlement residents.

In 1948 someone, presumably one of the Tax party, administered the Goodenough Draw a Man Test at the settlement school. It should be remembered that interest in intelligence quotients was higher a quarter of a century ago, and that the use of a nonverbal test would bypass the ever-present language problem. The results were quite flattering to some seventy settlement students. The indicated I.Q.'s ranged from 70 to

159 and centered on 100. Nineteen were over 120, and 2 were scored over 150 (93, p. 1078).

Over one hundred pages of the rather voluminous Sol Tax Field Notes are taken up with responses to a Thematic Apperception Test. This is a test in which the subject is shown a series of pictures and asked to make up stories to go with some of them. There was difficulty with one settlement member over this test, and he thought he should ask his chief before he took it. "All his suspicion of whites and his fundamental superstition [of witches] was aroused" (93, p. 1368). When the subject of the T.A.T. was dropped with this member relations with the party were improved. It is doubtful that the settlement residents who took the T.A.T. fully understood the degree of insight into attitudes and feelings that this test would give to the administrator of it. There follows an example which points up the relatively mature attitude toward sex which many Mesquakie possess. It is especially impressive when it is juxtaposed with white attitudes of over twenty-five years ago in mid-Iowa.

Once there was man who came home up from work and found nobody at home. So he didn't put up the lights in his home. He was standing right in the window looking out, wondering when his wife was going to come home. But his wife never showed up until about two o'clock in the morning. But the man didn't say nothing to his wife, coming home late. He just let her come in and get ready to go to sleep, and forgot the whole thing (93, p. 1005).



A feature noted by the Chicago party in 1948 was what seemed a great change in attitude and general feeling on the settlement from the time when Sol Tax had been there in the early thirties. Tax had recalled it as a pleasant and quiet community with little evidence of discontent (38, p. 26). Strife and general dissatisfaction seemed much more in evidence in 1948 (93, p. 136 and 1780), especially among young Mesquakie veterans recently returned from World War II. "Those young veterans were reaching out, I knew; I think now that I grossly underestimated how desperately" (39, p. 147). Two major happenings seem to have contributed to the general lack of contentment that appeared to have come about from 1934 to 1948. One of these was World War II, during which many Mesquakie moved in order to take advantage of job opportunities, and Indian veterans had returned to Tama where being refused service at bars rankled them. The other feature was the setting up of a formal governing council elected by the tribal members, which was done in 1937. This intensified the split into factions which had its real beginning with the establishment of the Toledo boarding school at the turn of the century, the memory of it very much alive in the settlement in 1948, though the government-backed chief had died in 1919. As a 1949 resident put it, "They owe us \$40,000, the government does, because they cheated us out of this money to pay Push" [Push--

Pushetonequa, who received \$500 per annum from the government till his death in 1919] (93, p. 177).

But the life of the students on or near the settlement was far from unpleasant. Lighter elements included a young man shouting to a budding anthropologist in Mesquakie while they were playing ping-pong (he "forgot") and the success of "the Chicago version of baseball poker" at the settlement Legion Hall (93, p. 578). Also the Chicago students brought "authentic Mesquakie aboriginal type primitive Woolworth merchandise" for settlement residents to sell at "the old stone house," a tourist stand on what was then Highway 30 [currently standing but in a state of disrepair] (93, p. 577).

With the publication of A Documentary History of the Fox Project, a compilation of writings (including letters) of the dozen or more members of the group, the tenure of the University of Chicago students and graduate students was ended. The history was candid if not concise, and the reading of it made the Mesquakie aware that they had been made party to an investigation and compilation without being made aware of the process while it was happening.<sup>1</sup> Eventually, the land of the farm purchased for the student residence and rented in part to an Indian farmer [not to be confused with government farmer, see below] became a part of the

<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

settlement. The farmhouse itself was torn down and the new Presbyterian Church was erected on the site (circa 1970). Some members of the Tax party returned on occasion and were welcomed, including Tax himself and Fred Gearing [see Bibliography], but the gathering of information and direct concern with such programs as Tamacraft and the Indian College student program were at an end. By 1960 the "Fox Project" was finished.

The end of the Fox project did not mark the end of the stream of students and others interested in Indian culture or perchance an advanced degree at a university. Requests for studies reached the Tribal Council Chairman on an average of once a month, and even high school students came out, wanting to do some type of original research.<sup>1</sup> The problem of inundation by researchers is a common one of Indian reservations and schools other than the Tama settlement,<sup>2</sup> and some areas of Indian residency under federal government auspices have simply had to "close the door".<sup>3</sup> It is something of a paradox that most Whites know so very little of Indian culture, legal position, and educative problems, and that in trying to educate themselves in the area they become at best a nuisance and at worst a serious disruptive in-

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<sup>1</sup>Lavern Seth, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.  
Columbus Keahna, Tama. Council meeting. 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Wallace Galuzzi, Haskell. Personal interview. 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

fluence by the sheer weight of their numbers.

Even for the investigators who manage a start on their projects (many are discouraged early) there are a number of unusual problems. Efforts are made to cultivate individual Indians in order to get their cooperation. Purchase of artifacts is a satisfactory method to use at the settlement, and with it there is a tacit understanding that information (not a great deal or anything unusual) will come with the purchase. One method tried was the planting of a large group of gladiola bulbs for a resident who expressed interest in these.<sup>1</sup> It did not produce the desired results though the gladiolas did well enough. It needs, really, to be said. Information at the Mesquakie Indian settlement has become a commodity for sale or trade. This kind of direct statement is avoided, usually, by both the investigators and the residents, but the truth of it becomes more obvious as the time spent on a project increases.

A condition exists at the settlement that makes studies often suspect as to their integrity. The Mesquakie and the Bureau officials are very conscious of their public image, especially the former. Complimentary reports are looked on with approval, but negative reports are not really welcomed. The writer was faced with "We don't know what you will write,"

<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

from which he inferred that it was all right to write of matters which would help the settlement or more specifically "The People."<sup>1</sup> One investigator in the sixties commented, "I wanted to get at the truth, and the truth is the last thing anybody wanted."<sup>2</sup> The situation is understandable. There is and has been poverty on the settlement from its beginning. There are relatively large numbers of "illegitimate" children. Alcoholism has been and still is a constant problem. Objective reporting of some things such as animism in the native religion or a profound lack of respect for the Protestant Work Ethic may be impossible for white investigators.

But all in all the relationship between the settlement and the scientists appears healthy. Most of the ones who come recognize the problems of their presence. As one anthropologist put it in 1949, "The settlement seems rather overrun with missionaries, anthropologists, patrol cars, and tourists now and then" (93, p. 446). Humor appears. The writer asked a resident what Sol Tax was like. "Oh, he was about like most professors. Talked a lot. Didn't listen much." The steady flow of investigators has made it somewhat difficult for Bureau officials. Articulate and often zealous,

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<sup>1</sup>From a comment by a tribal council member at a meeting of the same, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Hoyt, Ames. Personal interview. 1972.

the scientists have not been ultimately responsible for the things that they have promoted among the Indians, and as one Bureau man put it, rather glumly, "Yes, they come, and then they go. We stay."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1972.

THE MESQUAKIE AND AGRICULTURAL  
ASSIMILATIVE EFFORTS

The efforts of Whites to assimilate Indians in general and the Mesquakie in particular into white civilization have perhaps been often ill-advised, erratic and selfish, but they have been most persistent. The resistance of the Mesquakie to these changes has rarely been unanimous but it has been consistent and remarkably effective. Some designs for assimilation, such as the boarding school, were originally resisted by the tribe and later came to be largely accepted [see above]. Other concepts such as that of turning the Indians into farmers had a very limited success after a century and a half of efforts by Whites to bring it about. Some manifestations of white culture such as the Indian band on the Tama settlement were successful for some decades and then died out. It is the purpose of this chapter to bring out the elements of pressure to assimilate the Mesquakie into a pattern of agricultural existence similar to that of their white neighbors.

Currently great emphasis on agricultural modernization and development for the Mesquakie is not being stressed, but until approximately 1950 this had been an area emphasized not only by boarding schools but by most of the agents and even by the Chicago student group. In addition to Mr. Ewing, the

"agriculturalist" whose unethical conduct had shocked Mr. Clark as early as 1805 [see page 24], one Nicholas Boilvin was appointed "assistant agent" for tribes above the Missouri River and along the Mississippi. He was to extend help to Mr. Ewing, to encourage the growing of potatoes by the Indians (and plant them in his own garden), and "as soon as practicable" he was to be "furnished with a Blacksmith" to repair hoes and guns. And Boilvin was to introduce "ploughs...as soon as any of the chiefs will consent to use them" (35, p. 350).

With the unsettled times surrounding the War of 1812 and emphasis on the fur trade, efforts to make farmers of the Sac and Fox remained at a minor level until after the Black Hawk War. In 1837, Congress voted \$10,000 to be spent over a period of ten years to support "Pattern Farm," the title being indicative of the hopes its promoters had for it. This farm, located near the present site of Agency, Iowa, was begun in April of 1839. It seems to have been felt that - with blacksmiths at the agency, mills for the grinding of flour conveniently close, and an operational farm as a living, growing example - the Sac and Fox would settle into a peaceful, agrarian existence. John Beach, made agent following the death of General J. M. Street, his father-in-law, felt that as soon as the farm got squared away the benefits of "civilization" would be immediately



obvious and that

...then will the indifference now manifested towards education, and their aversion to the introduction of schools among them be removed...and...then, can they be taught to feel a sincere interest in the sublime truths of religion...(6, September 3, 1840).

Being surrounded by the benefits of white civilization was to make a situation in which the Indians would prefer the offerings of the "zealous Christian, over the mercenary allurements of sordid avarice" (6, September 3, 1840).

Despite getting some provisions from the farm to help them in the winter of 1841-1842, which gave the Indians a more sanguine view of farming than formerly (6, to Chambers, March 4, 1842), and the great success of two acres of watermelons, preferable even to whiskey (33. p. 49), the farm was not to prove successful in interesting Indians in agriculture. None of the farm work at Pattern Farm was done by any of the Indians. "Hands" were hired not only to maintain the farm but to harvest the Indian's wheat as well. This wheat was on land other than Pattern Farm which had been plowed and fenced (with rails) and sown to furnish wheat so that the Indians could then get it ground into flour at the mills. Problems in running Pattern Farm and the mills included the killing of hogs (2) by Indians, the burning of one of the mills, probably by disgruntled white squatters, and the turning of the pony herd into the wheat field on two occasions. On the first they destroyed sixteen acres of wheat, and on the

second the foraging of the herd cut the yield on the remaining fifty-four acres.

Groups of Indian visitors came to the farm where they stayed overnight and were fed. These visits proved somewhat disturbing and disruptive to farmer Kerr as did disgruntled farm hands who objected to getting up before sunup (6).

Hope for interesting the Sac and Fox in farming and related factors of civilization was not abandoned although "None...exhibited an inclination to undergo a practical instruction in agriculture or any mechanical art further than they can acquire by a mere casual observation" (6, September 2, 1840). Even had the Indians remained where they were in their eastern Iowa location, the success of Pattern Farm would have been doubtful. Squatters were coming in, bringing whiskey and occasionally stealing horses. The role of a farmer was not enticing to Indian men, and segments of the Sac and Fox were scattered in villages over a wide area so that much exposure to the operation of the farm would take a commitment that few if any would be willing to venture. They would have had to stay at the farm, mill or agency throughout the year in a position subservient to many individual Whites. Pattern Farm was finished as an example and as an instructional device in 1843. The agency was moved from the location some eighteen miles west of Fairfield to roughly the

present location of Des Moines, Iowa. Since the farm was on a tract that was being turned over to white settlement at that time, it was sold with the proceeds going into the funds for the joint tribes.

With the move to Western Iowa by the Indians in the spring of 1843 the farm was run for their benefit until harvest in the fall. Difficulty with settlers was immediate as they tried to help themselves to the farm's timber, much needed for lumber and fuel in those days. Beach was fearful that the loss of the timber would hurt the sale of the farm. Agent Beach and a marshall were both threatened with violence over the pending sale, the settlers feeling that anything over \$1.25 per acre, the rate paid for other land settled, would be unfair. It is well to remember that this kind of "club law" was in effect when one is judging the early efforts with the Indians (6, Beach to Chambers, June through August, 1843). The country's frontier elements were not among the most genteel and law-abiding as a rule. Most frontier Whites had little sympathy for Indians who failed to take advantage of opportunities or to avail themselves of Christian salvation.

The Kansas reservation, to which the main body of the Fox moved (reluctantly) in 1846, was not an agricultural setting of the kind that Pattern Farm had been. Efforts were made to establish a manual labor school at the new

agency, but this was difficult because Indian funds were to be used. A mission school was run for a time (under twenty students) from 1863 to about 1874 and again land was associated with the school (100 acres), but it is doubtful that any of the Fox attended. They had begun the moves to Iowa by 1856. They did not participate in medical treatment by a doctor hired by Beach, and some of the Fox were so out of sorts with the conditions in Kansas that they made a drunken and ill-advised foray into Missouri. The main support of the Sac and Fox at this time appears to have been \$80,000 in annuities, about one-third of which was dispersed directly to tribal members. The first land for farming was broken in 1847 in Kansas, but few Mesquakie took up the hoe. The Mesquakie began to come back to Iowa, obtaining their first legal land foothold of 80 acres in 1856 [see above]. This was the size of the Tama Indian settlement until 1865 when 40 acres of timber were added, presumably for fuel (30). Hunting in Iowa and annuities in Kansas seem to have been the mainstay of the original Mesquakie settlement group.

The Iowa settlement grew "through the bounty of the state and national government" (14, p. 39), most purchases being made from federal funds, and practically no growth was made until Leander Clark became the first agent (with accompanying annuities and payments to be made in Iowa for the first time since 1845) in 1866. There was not enough

land to support the tribal group prior to that time even had they been inclined to change their way of life to an agricultural one. By 1870 the settlement included some 470 acres and continued to grow over the next thirty years (30). From 1870 on it was possible for the Mesquakie to turn to agriculture as a major part of their life style and as a way of supporting themselves economically. Agents from Clark to Lesser encouraged purchases of land with this in mind. Lesser in particular managed great additions to the settlement acreage when a government settlement for Sac and Fox lands sold in Oklahoma netted the Mesquakie some \$95,000. \$57,000 of this was put into land purchases (3, Lesser, 1893, p. 151).

The Mesquakie had contact with area farmers early as seasonal laborers. Agent Leander Clark mentioned some \$2,100 earned by men of the tribe in 1871 and 1872 from binding and shocking of grain (the bill-hook knotter was not in common use at this time), and agent Thomas Free wrote in 1877 that "many are skillful binders and secure good wages" (3, Clark, 1871, p. 516, 1872; Free, 1877).

The Indian farmer, a man employed by the government to assist Indians in becoming better farmers, was a feature of the Tama settlement as early as 1876. The "farmer employed" maintained "an irregular attendance" at the first schoolhouse on the settlement in addition to instruction in agriculture.

He was also something of a samaritan about the camp, especially in winter when the majority of the Indians left on winter hunts and left the old and infirm to care for themselves (3, Free, 1877). One finds the "farmer," "Indian farmer," and "old farmer" referred to in agents reports and other sources. It is not clear whether the position was usually filled or not. The position of "farmers" in the Indian service was not a universal success. One agent Twiss, with the Sioux in 1856, "recommended that Indian traders be encouraged to farm" since he believed that "their example... would be more powerful among their Indian customers than the instructions of paid farmers" (34, p. 175). Usually the farmers lived "on reservation" and at Tama some were housed at various times in the original school building on the settlement.

The Mesquakie seem to have responded to their "farmers" on a varied and individual basis. In 1927, 180 members of the tribe signed a petition and managed to bring about the removal of one government farmer (93, p. 222). Other "farmers" were popular on the settlement. One, Mr. Gruber, started a temporarily successful canning operation which ran for a few years prior to this man's death in the early forties. At a meeting of the Drum Society [a religious group, see below], on the settlement the Chicago Students met "The old farmer couple" who were dancing and partici-

pating. They were told of the couple "jogging up and down with the rest" that "they belong" (93, p. 1516). The position of "resident farmer" was abolished on the settlement around 1942 (30), but memories of "old farmers" are still about.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian pony herd was a problem that concerned agents from the time of General Street (first agent) on. In some cases the ponies caused trouble simply by being available to "miserable poor white trash who" would "steal their ponies" (93, pp. 1830-1850 [Toledo Chronicle, July 22, 1874]), but also the ponies seemed to be a temptation to the Mesquakie to be on the move, rather than to remain on the settlement and look after crops. Pasture was preferable to plowed ground to the Indians and the pony herd took time and emphasis away from the agricultural activities that their agents would like to have seen pursued. Recommendation was made by Thomas Free in 1876 for more control over annuity payments so that more money could be forcibly channeled to such things as farm implements and houses and less to such expenditures as whiskey (3, Free, 1876, pp. 60-61).

Despite pressure from agents from 1870 on, the pony herd remained large and cattle seemed impossible to introduce on the settlement, though efforts were made as early as 1870.

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

in 1888 "nothing of the cow kind is owned by Indians" (3, Green, 1888), and corn grown at this time was largely sweet corn. A year later although they had "from 600 to 900 acres of good farm land...they cultivate[d] less than 150 acres." Large quantities of the better ground was used for pasturage of the pony herd. Many of the ponies were unbroken and did not sell well (3, Lesser, 1890, p. 104). Some fifty years of agricultural emphasis from the beginning of Pattern Farm to the efforts of the agents and farmers of the Iowa settlement had produced few results by 1890.

The horses and ponies of the Mesquakie had been largely allowed to forage themselves through the winter months. The effect of this practice on the condition of the animals depended in large measure on the severity of the winter and the amount of snow. Agent Rebok apparently took over in a time of severe winters because "each spring we have had from 40 to 60 carcasses to bury." Faced with heavy snows one December and estimating that 100 of the herd would expire before spring, Rebok urged the Indians to care for the horses. He ran into great resistance on the part of the Indians and "...they even got their theology badly mixed up with this practical proposition," the Great Spirit taking the Indians' side of the argument. Finally, Rebok threatened to take the horses as "abandoned animals" under Iowa law and sell them for their keep. He built a corral and hauled



two loads of hay to it. Suddenly horses on the settlement were being cared for. Only six died during that winter and seventy-five head were sold in the spring (3, Rebok, 1898, p. 170).

Perhaps without the boarding school debacle that came at the turn of the century Rebok and others could have brought the Mesquakie into the practical side of white ways by such activities as the one just described, or perhaps the new farm at the boarding school was a big help in bringing about a situation whereby "In 1914 about one-half of the able bodied men on the settlement were engaged in agriculture, cultivating about a thousand acres" (17, p. 86). Efforts to make farmers out of the reluctant Mesquakie must have been a trying experience for agents, "farmers," and the Mesquakie themselves. The horse and pony problem may have been alleviated by Rebok's action in the winter of 1897-1898, but it did not disappear. Indian ponies did begin to give way to bigger and better horses, but slowly (3, Malin, 1906, p. 236). A later agent (circa 1913) had great trouble when he tried to get the council to consider the purchase of a draft [emphasis mine] stallion for use on settlement mares. But the majority of the council at that time was more concerned with "a junketing trip for several councilmen" from funds paid for railroad right of way. Finally the draft stallion purchase was considered. Those council members having mares favored the purchase. Those without

mares opposed it (93, pp. 1820-1834, [from the Mesquakie Booster]).

From 1913 until at least 1916 a settlement publication called the "Mesquakie Booster" stressed local success with agricultural matters. Good oat yields were mentioned; Mesquakie men running grain binders [the bill-hook knotter had made its appearance] and the fact that Indians did all the work at threshing time save that done by the traveling crew of the "rig" [threshing machine, water tender, steam engine] was noted. When a Kapayou's corn won out over five white men's individual entries at the Tama fair it was news for the Mesquakie Booster (93, pp. 1820-1834 [from the Mesquakie Booster]). Indians whose conservative attitudes were opposed to those promoted by the editor (also agent for the settlement) were referred to as "kickers." In reference to the death of one of these Indians the Booster reported.

He was probably the only adult male on the reservation who persisted in wearing the blanket. He could speak English, could write the Indian language, was a good farmer,... [emphasis mine] (93, pp. 1820-1834).

The Booster, referred to in the Tax notes as "an assimilationist document," covered other matters than agriculture. "We expect all eligible children to be enrolled by September 25, after which steps will be taken to enforce attendance" [at the day schools, Fox and Mesquakie]. House occupation, especially by the government sponsored chief, Pushetonequa,

was mentioned as was the first Christian burial within the tribe. A Mesquakie girl was forced to cease going to Tama to school because of "difficulty in securing a place to board...." And a debate, "large crop vs. small crop," took an hour and a half to complete at the Indian Y.M.C.A. [at the settlement]. The debate was held entirely in Mesquakie (93, pp. 1820-1834).

While a few individual Mesquakie have made farming their vocation, usually on the settlement itself, as a tribal way of life it has had only the most limited success. In a 1929 publication the Mesquakie are presented as the antithesis of the successful farming community. "They like to hunt and fish or lie under the trees better than they like to plow corn or shock grain..." and:

The women talk around their fires, or hoe in the gardens. The children play among the wickiups or down by the river. The men race horses, lie and smoke under the trees, or perhaps fix the harness or saddles of the ponies. [however] Some of them raise corn just like white farmers (61, p. 168).

And despite the fact that in 1921 "the agency farmer, who is employed by the government is teaching them crop rotation" (66), over a decade later one of the problems to be overcome in attempts to make the use of lime popular was that "...stories have been circulating that those little limestone rocks will grow into big rocks..." (53, p. 18). Antagonism toward various agency farmers over the years

(13, p. 22) may have contributed to the above situation in 1929. Despite the predominance of vocational emphasis in schooling received by the Indians and efforts over the years toward making agriculture an acceptable way of life, there was little evidence of positive results on the settlement in mid-twentieth century. Few families had a cow; gardens were inefficient and often nonexistent, and "relatively few men...till the plot of land assigned to them" (13, pp. 21-22).

When the Tax group arrived in 1948 there was some discontent over land assignments on the settlement. There were good memories of the deceased Mr. Gruber and the "farmer's club...a 4-H club, and a cannery" (93, p. 544). The clubs and activities associated with agriculture had ended with the demise of the "Indian farmer here then who was really back of it" (93, p. 544).

Efforts to renew interest in a community farm project by members of the Chicago group were unsuccessful, and from 1950 to the present few Mesquakie on the settlement farm as a major source of income. Those who do have a tradition within their individual Indian families, and by a kind of general acknowledgment or acceptance land use passes from ancestors to offspring within these families. While there has been a provision for land to be assigned by the tribal council since the adoption of the 1937 constitution whereby

two years of disuse or improper use could mean the reassignment of the land held (29, pp. 6-7), land allotment and uses seemed in a state of limbo. Some land was given or assigned by the council, some was inherited [the permanent use of it], and some was simply "borrowed" and then not returned (93, p. 379 [among many references]). The process of "lending" land which is not being used by the person to whom it has been officially assigned is avoided simply for fear of not getting it back, and thus idle plots of ground were found about the settlement in 1950 even though there was a demand for ground. The Council had the power to assign land but "public opinion" wouldn't let them (93, p. 600). The Chicago group had no trouble in renting their farm land to a settlement Indian renter.

Understandably there was no particular desire for land reform on the part of those in control of the ground (93, p. 558). Also "plans or schemes for economic rehabilitation, etc., if they ever get to the council level for discussion, wind up being discussed in terms of personal allegiances or animosities" (93, p. 204). No real concept of what Whites would consider proper land use and the procedures and regulations that would govern the same existed for most Mesquakie in mid-twentieth century. It is doubtful if this concept exists to any great degree in 1973.

### Efforts at Allotting Indian Land

From the Dawes Act of 1887 until the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, part of the policy of the federal government included the owning of Indian land in severality and the allotting of individual plots which could be sold by these individuals (allotments) irrespective of the wishes of the other members of the tribe. In operation the various allotment acts resulted in Indians being bilked out of huge portions of their land holdings at terms often far less than the actual value of the land. Safeguards were set up and the laws changed, but usually these safeguards and changes came after much of the land had been sharked up, and Whites proved masters at finding loopholes around the intentions of Congress.

During this period of land losses by American Indians, the Mesquakie were fortunate. From 1890 to 1900, when Indians as tribes in this country were losing one-third of their landholdings (1, p. 58), the Mesquakie (largely with funds from sales of lands in Oklahoma) were able to more than double their territory. Whether the observation of the effects of individual allotments on tribal life and land holdings in other areas was the major cause or not, the Mesquakie have consistently resisted all pressures to bring about ownership of land in severality and any opportunity

for individual tribal members to sell holdings.

The government pressure was particularly strong for this kind of procedure from 1909 to the early twenties (95, p. 5), but resistance on the part of the tribe and the legalities stemming from their peculiar legal status with the state of Iowa combined to frustrate the desires of the Bureau and perhaps some Whites in the area of Tama County. Unlike their counterparts in Oklahoma, the Mesquakie made provision that only children of male members of the tribe might become members. Also, the requirements of residency on the settlement are relatively stringent and female members of the tribe cannot assign land if they marry outside the tribe, though males can (29, pp. 1-10). These provisions of the 1937 constitution seem designed to prevent attempts by non-Mesquakie to sell or gain control of land under circumstances that would weaken and tend to break up the settlement.

Countrywide an average of roughly two-thirds of the allotments that gave patents (deeds) to individual Indians resulted in the loss of land and/or cash to the Indian involved. "He was a citizen certified competent, could vote and he was destitute." Combines or cliques of men often worked together to fleece the Indians through contracts and legalities (88, pp. 148-168). The worst of these kinds of situations was over by 1923, and the Mesquakie would appear

to have done well in resisting individual ownership.

But it is a rare gain that has no loss connected. Many Whites lost thousands of acres and dollars in the same way that Indians did and were not regarded as incompetent. They learned, brutally perhaps, from the experience. Also reporting agents for the Bureau noted that the white neighbors had a great deal to do with the success or failure of the Indians who received individual title to their land (88, pp. 148-168). So while the Mesquakie land holdings remained intact, their ability to deal in real estate was not developed, and their relations with Whites as neighbors and fellow landholders was never put to a real test. In 1953 the Bureau of Indian Affairs responded to a request by the House of Representatives for a rating of the tribes under their jurisdiction as to whether they were ready to take over the "full management of their own affairs." The Sac and Fox of Iowa (Mesquakie) were not considered to be in this position, but the Sac and Fox of Oklahoma were, save for a small minority (95, pp. 44-47). Perhaps the maintaining of the tribal holdings of the Mesquakie was done at the price of not becoming familiar and at ease with real-estate transactions and general business affairs.

One reason that the break-up of Mesquakie tribal land holdings was wanted by some Whites was that it was very difficult to work desired projects with Indians willing to try



them because the tribe would not go along with them. Thus in 1884 Joe Tesson, who had land next to the settlement but under title to himself directly (97, see preceding map) was selected as one of the first to be urged to put up a house, which Tesson did, "solely by the influence and persuasion of the Agent, Colonel Davenport..." and with some assistance from the agency farmer (12, p. 192). Tesson, a civil war veteran, a man fluent of speech but who could not write, might have been persuaded partially because he received remuneration of some \$400 per year as an interpreter (93, pp. 1837-1839, Orford [later Montour] Weekly Leader). Probably more houses could have been pushed with individual land holdings if other Mesquakie had had them, as could have other assimilative ideas of government agents. The tribe as a group did not begin to get houses on any significant scale until a government program began to bring them in the early 1900s prior to World War I, at which time the Bureau of Indian Affairs "attempted to make an attractive house a civilizing factor" (56, p. 138).

One final effort by the government to make the settlement into a successful Iowa agricultural community was tried in 1944 when

...the Government drafted an ambitious, laudable ten-year plan for the Fox settlement. They proposed paving the roads, doubling the land area, establishing a retail store, and raising the economic level

generally by practicable means, these were projects that almost all the Fox would like to see in effect. The Government embarked upon a mild promotion campaign. But only with Tribal Council members. The Council voted it down. For the Council, with the support of only a section of the community, is afraid to act and is virtually immobilized. And, of course, acceptance by the Council without community support would not be enough for implementation of such an undertaking as the Government put forward (38, p. 292).

There well may have been other reasons for the refusal of the Council or in effect the Mesquakie to go along with the seemingly excellent plan of the Government (as seen in 1944 at least). For instance by 1944 movements were being made in both houses of Congress toward termination of the Indian Bureau and of services of it to the tribes (95, p. 22), and the Mesquakie may have feared the loss of these. But the above illustrates the difficulty had by government agencies in working with tribes including the Mesquakie, even when trying to bring about conditions that appeared to be in nearly everyone's best interest.

Efforts to turn the Mesquakie to agriculture have been gone now for some decades. The pony herd has disappeared save for some photos of handsome pintos, probably taken in the forties, that rest in the files at the local B.I.A. office on the settlement. Some Mesquakie farm settlement grounds, but these are the minority. No settlement families live solely by agriculture.<sup>1</sup> One young farmer near Vining

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<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview, 1971.

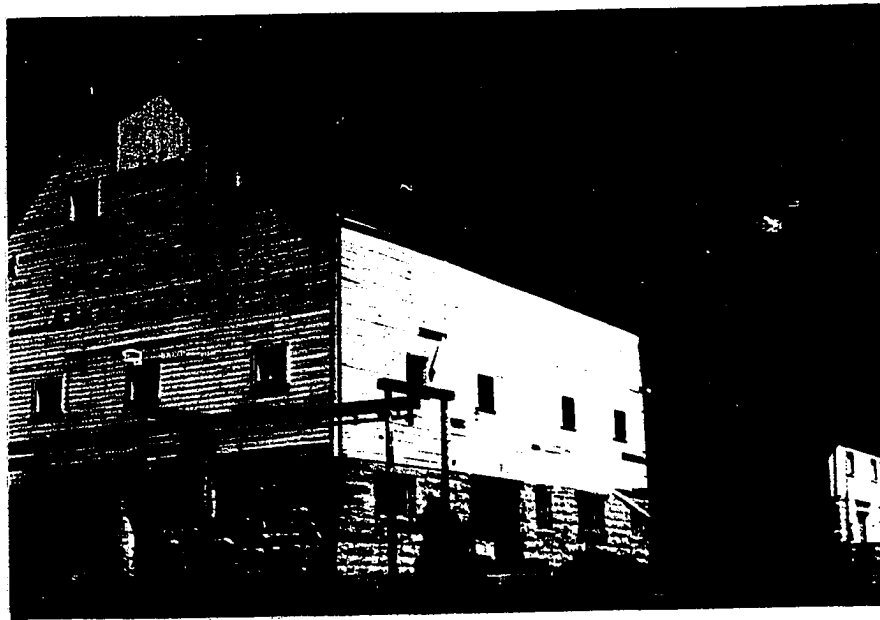


Figure 10. Barn of the Toledo Boarding School

is a Mesquakie, a former resident at the settlement. Few cattle or hogs are seen as one drives through the settlement, though both are in abundance on nearby White lands. Indian settlement ground is rented to Whites and the proceeds are used to pay taxes on the land as has been the case for some forty years. One hundred and seventy years of urging, boarding schools, and government programs have not made farmers of the main body of the Mesquakie.

## TRADITIONAL EDUCATION OF THE MESQUAKIE

A writer of the early 1880s in describing the "Musquakies" pictured them as

...surrounded by thousands of white inhabitants, with their churches, schools, and all the elements of advanced civilization,...clinging with the tenacity that seems to be inherent in their natures to all the superstitious rites and primitive habits of aboriginal and savage life (32, pp. 435-436).

Views of Mesquakie customs are a great deal more sophisticated today. But knowledge and understanding of their beliefs and cultural mores are most difficult for Whites to obtain. A thorough job would require mastery of the language, and this was more often accomplished by traders rather than philosophers. Nevertheless an explanation of major elements of Mesquakie culture, most of which are shared with other Indian tribes, needs to be attempted. It is a difficult, perhaps impossible, task. In 1847 Agent John Beach had "the honor to state that no books have ever been printed in the language of the Sacs and Foxes" (6, Beach to Harvey, Aug. 5, 1847). The one book in the language by Cha-ka-to-ko-si, printed in 1907, contains some forty-three pages and is a mixture of tribal history from 1840 to 1900 and a recording of recent (at that time) events "such as an account of the suicide of an Indian woman; the killing of an Indian by the cars [railroad]; the purchase of a harvesting machine; the putting of a telephone" in the home of the book's author (15, prefatory notes). Most of

what we know of Mesquakie culture--the life style, the "bundle" religion, Indian medicine, family relationships--has come through the curious but unacclimated eyes of Whites, the greatest number of whom had little real understanding of Mesquakie history and tradition. And of these Whites only an infinitesimal number ever mastered the Mesquakie language. Yet

The more we work, the more we see we have to control the language...we need to deal with problems of thought patterns that we think distinguish the Indians from neighboring whites, and we can't do it without the language (38, p. 291) [this is in 1955]).

But since none of the Tax group had "yet mastered Fox" in 1955, nor indeed in 1972 (40), and since the informants for the scientists had to deliver their ideas in English, the writer is (and the reader should be) most aware that the material in this section is Mesquakie life through white viewpoints--a definitely limited view.

Remnants and Memories from the Hunting, Fishing,  
Trading, Trapping and Gardening Time

What is often called the "hunting and fishing stage" in various societies has had a very gradual disappearance among the Mesquakie. The annuities and provisions supplied by treaties with the United States Government enabled hunting and trapping to continue long after they would have lasted had they been the entire economic support of the

tribe. In May of 1874 the bulk of the settlement, gone "since October," returned in late May in time for annuity payments (93, p. 1853 [Toledo Chronicle, May 28, 1874]). In 1880 one-half of the settlement population dispersed to hunt in the winter (38, p. 14). This figure is somewhat more impressive when one recalls that the people left in camp would tend to be those least able to stand the rigors of travel. Gradually, of course, there was less travel through the winter and the other seasons, but in the early twenties hunters and trappers were still going out from the settlement for weeks at a time, and while there were a few (6) automobiles on the settlement, most traveling was done "on horseback or on foot" (66). One woman, a current resident of Marshalltown, who lived at one time on the edge of Legrand, Iowa, some five or six miles west of the settlement, recalls Indians stopping at her father's farm about twice a year. The Indian women would appear early in the morning on the porch and request flour, eggs, and a fat hen. Also they would get some fruit and hay and grain for their ponies. This would be enough to last them the several days that would be spent on the slough [no longer in existence] near Quarry, Iowa, several miles from the Legrand location. Always they would leave a basket and beadwork or a pair of child's moccasins. And they were "very proud."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Maxine Rhodes, Marshalltown. Personal interview. 1972.

A somewhat idealized account of the early life of the Mesquakie of 1800 on the Mississippi written in the mid-1930s furnishes some insight into camp life (84). The authors, Hulla Rhode and Bessie Coon, worked through a Mesquakie interpreter to get their information, the manuscript then being checked for error with Jim Poweshiek (one of the tribal police at the time the Toledo Boarding School was begun) by the interpreter (Jonas Poweshiek, now deceased, formerly worked for the State Historical Society) reading the work back to him in Mesquakie. While Jim Poweshiek, grandson of the chief who was reluctant to leave Iowa, was born in 1858 (97, p. 206), he said "It takes me back to young days when we did all these things" (84, p. x).

The things done included riding ponies to marshes where cattails were collected. These were then dried and sewn with bone needles into mats for covers of the summer wicki-ups. The thread was made from the fibers of nettles, collected in winter after the frost had taken care of the stinging qualities of the plants (84, p. 23, 49-50). The scaling of speared fish with a clamshell and the "shelling" of steamed corn ears with clamshells (the kernels to be dried and stored: from this we get the "corn-shelling" of today) were also camp tasks. "Sometimes the corn and maple sugar were combined in a favorite dish" (84, p. 23). When not occupied with food preserving and preparation or looking



after pelts, the women might sew beads obtained from the trader into decorations on moccasins (84, p. 36) or make nettle string from the fibers which were carried along on trips (84, p. 95). All in all, to a modern reader the book shows the daily life of Mesquakie women to be somewhat tiresome, though the scenes and tasks varied throughout the year from hunting camp to sugar camp to village. The kind of woman who would have made a good wife for a young Mesquakie man in the 1800s may be indicated by the following.

Ba-wa-qui-ha was a good girl. She could weave the floor mats, wickiup mats, carrying bags, and beadwork. She could dress the game, tan the skins, cook and sew, and make nettle string. She could also build a good wickiup.

Qua-ta-che and Ba-wi-shi-ka [father and mother of the groom] were glad their son had chosen such a good girl for a wife (84, p. 139).

The picture of camp and village life by Rhode and Coon, designed for grade school age readers, is quite thin. It does include events long past such as a good buffalo hunt with plenty of meat to dry because of the deep snow that prevented the game from running well and the celebration that followed the hunt. "They danced long into the night. Te-bi-she-shi-ka danced behind his father trying to imitate his graceful steps" (84, p. 79). The drums at the dance were made from hollowed sections of tree trunks, with stretched deerskins acting as drumheads (84, pp. 178-179). A description of the making of a bark house showed that the

bark came from elm trees two feet in circumference from which strips of green elm bark two feet by six feet were peeled and placed on a dome-like frame (84, pp. 113-117).

There are some conventions that are still observed from those times when each Mesquakie had a horse or pony and when large segments of time were spent in camps away from the villages. One of these is dancing. Not all the Mesquakie dance at the annual Pow Wow, but most grow up with dancing as a portion of settlement life. Dancing is approached in a more complete way than most Whites tend to think of it. The world around the Mesquakie "dances," water in streams, birds as they fly, grasses in the wind.<sup>1</sup> And even though the feet do follow some basic steps "Movements of the feet do not constitute dancing" rather dancing is done with "ones whole physical being. Every part of the body and the mind must dance" (84, p. 191 [quoting Ed Davenport]). And so the dance remains an integral part of the Mesquakie life. Its most obvious manifestation for Whites is at the annual Pow Wow. But from long before Black Hawk and a group of Indians, on their way to see the "Spanish Father" in the St. Louis of 1803, "danced through the town as usual" (8, p. 21) until the present, dancing has remained. It is a far richer experience for the Mesquakie than most Whites can realize.

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<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

Another convention survives. While the only bark house made recently is one for a tourist attraction near present Highway 30, there is a preference among many settlement residents, when weather permits, for having meals cooked in the open and featuring Indian bread, fried in a kettle over an open fire.

#### The Mesquakie and Indian Medicine

Indian medicines are still used on the settlement at Tama, though less reliance is placed on them now than in the past (38, 98). An attitude has grown among some Mesquakie whereby the skill and success of "white physicians in handling white disease" including smallpox and venereal disease [many Mesquakie are apparently unaware of one of the discoveries of Columbus] is recognized. But the power of Indian medicine for "Indian" ills is still maintained (87, p. 19). Somehow the Mesquakie seems to hold Whites responsible for disease. Diseases just weren't here before the Whites arrived (87, p. 63).

Considerable pride is sometimes shown because Indian remedies have been found to contain ingredients later isolated and used by white medical doctors, or perhaps remedies have proven to be the source of a "new" discovery in modern medical treatment. Some Indians feel that the Indians

had it all along; it simply wasn't classified and understood thoroughly.<sup>1</sup>

Medicine men or Indian doctors have done a good deal of traveling as well as having had patients come to them. In 1948 visiting doctors arriving at or called to the settlement for cases included a Sac from Oklahoma and a Pottowatomie from Wisconsin (93, pp. 2143-2144). In 1928 a settlement Indian, one John Macintosh, was a renowned medicine man in "five or six states." He kept notes on his medicines in Mesquakie, and he knew the plant sources of most of his medicines in all their forms through all seasons (89, pp. 180-181, pp. 193-198). His materials and the information that he supplied Huron Smith in the late twenties were a major source for both Smith's Ethonobotany of the Mesquakie Indians of 1928 and Weiner's Earth Medicine--Earth Foods of 1972 [Weiner used Smith's work for material].

The use of plant-based medicines was common among both Indians and Whites prior to 1900. There is no way of knowing that "Indian" remedies or at least a number of them did not come from white settlers over the years from 1600 to 1850. Indian doctors had some white patients (100, p. 1); and, as appears the case with religion, some exchanges of information undoubtedly took place and affected beliefs.

<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

A determining concept in the use of plant medicines is called the "doctrine of signatures." The plant used to treat an ailment would have an appearance that related to some aspect of the trouble or perhaps would have an appearance that resembled the affected organ or portion of the body. Thus one plant had leaves that looked like liver, and liver-leaf tea was considered good for liver ailments. A product from a milk-like plant was used as treatment for mothers whose milk-flow was inadequate. Gnarled wood was an ingredient of a medicine used for convulsions. The main scientific aspect of most Indian medicines appears to have been one of trial and error (100, p. 4), and the cures seem to have leaned heavily on the psychogenic principal for their effectiveness.

Treatment with most Indian medicines takes the form of "tea." This consists of a brew made (usually) by boiling a portion of the root, bark, leaf, or whatever, in water. The tea is then drunk, or perhaps applied in compresses or poultices. Mastery of the craft is not simple. The season in which the plant is collected makes a difference, and often the inner bark of a given tree or shrub is the source of the "tea."

Regardless of the efficiency (or lack of it) of the infinitely varied Indian medicine remedies, they tend to have little appeal for people not raised with faith in

them. "The Meskwaki applied root hairs or rootlets of skunk cabbage to affected teeth." Also tea brewed from the roots of the "common geranium" was used as a mouth rinse for "toothache, sore gums, and pyorrhea" (100, p. 70 and 119). There was great variety exhibited in the cures, among tribes and among individuals.

The Menominee Indians prepared a tea by boiling skunk cabbage root hairs and applying it to stop external bleeding. The leaf bases were applied in a wet dressing for bruises by the Meskwakis (100, p. 143).

Indian medicines also included love potions, several of these attributed to the Mesquakie (100, pp. 16-17). These were in use on the settlement as late as 1948 (93, p. 1468) as was a contraceptive medicine (93, p. 1275). Peyote, which had "extended its pernicious influence" to some 30 to 60 "adherents" among the Mesquakie by 1923 (58, p. 215), became a medicine used as something of a panacea by "many users" (100, p. 99). The fact that "The Fox and Chippewa boiled the inner bark of pine and drank large quantities of the resulting liquid to cure gonorrhoea" would seem to preclude the attractiveness of Indian medicine for most of the formally educated.

The coming of the missionary, Anna Skea, to the settlement in 1883 had some effect on the reliance on Indian medicines. Medical supplies were dispensed from the mission building to those in need. By 1899 the mission was operating

largely "along hygienic and sanitary lines" since they had "not one communicant" and education in health areas appeared to do more good (3, Malin, 1899, p. 201). As early as 1892 the agent, after reporting that health on the settlement was good, "everything considered," mentioned that some settlement members "now consult white physicians and a greater number call at the mission for medicine" (3, Lesser, 1892, p. 269). But in 1895 Agent Rebok found many cases of dire medical neglect on the settlement, several victims of which died (3, Rebok, 1895, pp. 167-168).

Health and medical attitudes on the settlement became a major issue in Tama County when smallpox broke out in 1902. It had been fifty years since the Kansas epidemic where the Mesquakie suffered heavily because they refused vaccination, but the resistance among many Indian leaders was still strong. A quarantine was enforced. Whites assisted on the reservation despite threats by conservative tribal members.

The Indians were very hostile to any scheme for disinfecting the camp, and were bitterly opposed to vaccination. The Indian policemen, Jim Poweshiek, shot many of their dogs. The Indians were furnished new suits and vaccinated [their old clothing was burnt and the vaccination done by force] (14, p. 51).

Despite the vaccination and sanitary measures, forty-two Indians died. Indian health had suddenly become a community concern. On the settlement the "medicine lodge" had been

defunct for some fifty years, but a mysterious "singing around" society, used at least in part for the driving away of bad spirits and which had been about to die out, had an immediate revival (93, p. 455).

Despite the smallpox epidemic and later the presence of the sanatorium on the grounds of the former boarding school at Toledo (beginning circa 1912), many Mesquakie still chose the services of their medicine men. Perhaps it was the (understandably) precipitous actions by the white community during the epidemic that helped maintain faith in the Indian ways of health, which were far more personalized. Also the Mesquakie, while not statistically healthy when compared to white communities, were fairly well off when compared to other Indian communities.

In 1922 the Indians for the most part still relied "on their own medicine men, in whom they still believe" (58, p. 214). In January of 1936, the enterprising principal of the new Indian school to locate at the present site in 1938, Mr. Benedict, visited a home to "build up friendly relations." He found a young man of eighteen whose mother spoke only Mesquakie. The young man had tuberculosis and the family "Uses Indian medicine for all illness" (13, p. 64). In 1946 "catnip is used for cholera in babies, stomach distress in adults; and as poultices for boils.... For congestion of the lungs they use Burdock tea" (60, p. 8). Over half a



century of efforts to lessen the influence "of squaw doctors and medicine men" (3, Stoops in the report of Rebok, 1897, p. 151), had had less than complete success.

The anthropologists from Chicago University who arrived in 1948 found a reluctance on the part of their settlement informants to discuss the whos and whats of Indian medicine use current at that time. This was probably because of fears of legal sanctions against such practices. However "cures" were discussed. One person attributed the cure of his case of tuberculosis to a female "doctor." She had the patient drink a herb brew instead of water. "I was in the sanatorium for awhile and once after this [the drinking of the herb brew] they took an X-ray and the spot on my lungs was gone." Another patient had "something" on her breast cured when another Indian slashed it three times with a razor and applied a herb poultice. The "doctor" had, the patient felt, a special or given talent and "knew" how to cure (93, p. 56). There was also a certain fear or respect for the Indian medicine doctors among some settlement residents because it was felt that they had special powers for which the term "witchcraft" was used (93, p. 1275). One Mesquakie woman interviewed "knew" that sickness could be caused by witchcraft, mentioning a facial cancer case on the settlement as evidence of the same (93, p. 1160 and p. 1216).

Following the closing of the "sanatorium and hospital"

in 1942, medical services were made available to the Mesquakie by the government contracting with the Tama Clinic to spend two hours a day at the settlement school. Some form of medical care has been made available since that time. But the results have not been particularly gratifying. A lack of knowledge about sanitation on the settlement creates problems in the schools. In 1970 Montour had "a health program under which Mesquakie children are showered twice a week so that they are more acceptable to white children" (87, p. 88). Over the years and at least as late as 1970, impetigo had been rampant on the settlement, and this was "intolerable" to Whites who had children in school. The impetigo caused a much greater stir than did the relatively high rates of tuberculosis and diabetes (87, p. 52). One of the causes of the impetigo was felt to be the lack of a pure water supply, and perhaps the deep well water system currently (1973) being installed may help to alleviate this problem.

The problem of informing the Mesquakie of medical treatment that would appear in their best interests involves more than their affinity for traditional medicine or their shunning of white ways. The Indians do not automatically bestow the respect that many whites give to a doctor, and often they have little time for a practitioner who does not appear to care for them personally (87, p. 69). Also "Many

Indian patients do not know how to take medicine and contend that the doctors will not explain things to them" (87, p. 66). While many Whites will accept a stiff lecture from a doctor as a matter of course, or perhaps even expect it, this sort of behavior is apt to offend the Indian and cause him not to return. A lack of understanding of treatment or resentment of a doctor's attitude will often not be exhibited by the Indians, especially the older ones (87, pp. 67-68), and thus the treating doctor is not even aware of misunderstood directions or offensive conduct on his part. In the opinion of a recent investigator of Mesquakie health

In order to educate a people such as the Mesquakie into accepting modern medicine, it is necessary first to educate oneself about the culture.... There is a need for education among the Mesquakie concerning disease prevention, health habits, care of the ill, first aid, etc.... But, such a program must be provided by people who understand Mesquakie society (87, p. 89).

#### Mesquakie Society

While the teaching of a Mesquakie youth is left largely to his parents, in a measure difficult for a non-Indian to comprehend, his responsibilities, duties, obligations and general relationship to the tribe are determined at birth.<sup>1</sup> He is immediately a member of either the Tokan group

<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

or the Kishko group, the first child in each family taking the group that the father belongs to, and the following children then alternating between these groups. Thus in a family with five children whose father was a Kishko, there would be three Kishko children and two Tokan. The current use of such delineation appears to be a simple way of picking sides at any time divisions are necessary (39, pp. 92-93). In the past "every boy at birth became a member of one of two war groups" and a system of healthy rivalry was maintained between the two "armies" (99, p. 10). This may have been the origin of the custom. So if the Mesquakie have competitive situations such as a ball game involving themselves "these two categories provided [provide] two sides automatically and impersonally" (39, pp. 92-93). In addition to this differentiation set at birth the majority of the Mesquakie will belong to one of the clans, of which there were originally seven, though several have died out. Bear, Wolf, Fox, and Thunder are still active. So for the some two-thirds of the Mesquakie who participate in the ceremonies and celebrations connected with the traditional religion, a structured place is there for them as they arrive. It is a portion of what an unremembered source meant when it indicated that Whites strive to "become" somebody while Mesquakie "are." [Probably Doc. Hist-Gearing].

The clans form the basic units for the traditional

religion (70, p. 10). Each clan has its sacred pack or bundle, made up of items important in the clan history (93, p. 848), somewhat similar to holy relics in some Christian churches, and these packs are kept a mystery to outsiders. This has caused many Whites to be as unduly curious about them as they are about the use of puppies as a portion of ceremonial feasts and about Mesquakie burial customs. Somehow the observable paraphernalia of a religion seems to receive more attention than the spiritual matters that it supposedly serves.

This sacred bundle, possessed by each family in the olden days, was composed of sacred wood, knives, pipes, tobacco, and the image of the clan animal, and was wrapped in a cow's hide. It was suspended on one side of the wickiup beside the sacred black gourds filled with corn or beans to be rattled at the weird ceremonial chants. [The bundle was opened at clan feasts at which dog meat was served]. Stories of the history and exploits of the tribe were told by the older men. [Dances]...were a part of the ritual (5, p. 22).

The Mesquakie language is necessary to the practice of the traditional religion.<sup>1</sup> This may be one reason that some Mesquakie would like to see their school run in Mesquakie rather than in English [although it would be a bit much for the State Department of Public Instruction]. The bundle religion, like Hinduism, does not exclude the practice of other religions on the part of its adherents. On the settlement only the Native American Church (Peyote)

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

and the Drum Society are mutually exclusive.<sup>1</sup>

In the operation of clan ceremonials the Mesquakie are very much at home and at ease (39, p. 96). Most of them are raised with these traditions, and they accept them and come to enjoy them much as many Whites come to accept and enjoy the activities of their churches. While the Mesquakie are often divided on political matters affecting the tribe and its relations with the white community or the government, "political enmities and rivalries seldom interfere with normal social intercourse, and rarely does real bitterness and personal feeling rise between members of opposite factions" (92, p. 247). All clan members are welcome at ceremonies, for the most part, regardless of animosities in other areas.<sup>2</sup>

Along with the traditional religious and ceremonial life of the community which is largely barred to outsiders, most Mesquakie have a familiar cultural conditioning that differs from that of most Whites. "To a Fox Indian his group of relatives is by far the most important social unit to which he is attached." The size of this "family" runs from fifty to one-hundred persons (92, p. 259). A Mesquakie youth is more likely to be taken to task by one of his uncles than by

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

his father when he steps out of line. Family matters are of great importance and a funeral is a four-day school absence for many Mesquakie students. Relationships among family members ("family" extends beyond the immediate family for most Mesquakie) are by tradition quite different from most white families. Many of these customs seem odd or perhaps ridiculous to Whites until they are analyzed and understood. Considerable liberty is often taken in a kind of off-color joking with one's brother-in-law or sister-in-law in Fox society. This might take the form of pretending to set up a tryst with the sister-in-law in front of others or even more direct suggestions of a sexual nature. Such conduct would appear odd to most Whites without some kind of explanation such as the following:

Traditionally, Fox marriages were arrangements between two families that created bonds and obligations between those two families. But if a man's wife died, the forms of cooperation that had become habitual and useful between the two families were disrupted. So the Fox had another rule: if one's wife died, it was preferred that one take her sister as a second wife, in order to preserve the ties between the two families. It followed: the sister of one's wife was, potentially, one's future wife, which created potential stress; untimely romantic inclination toward the sister-in-law, jealousy on the part of the wife. The situation came to be handled by trial and error over the generations. Joking in human affairs is often a form of avoidance. It is difficult to maintain intense sentiments when one is caused to play the buffoon, so when a Fox man encountered his sister-in-law he joked about his passion (39, pp. 92-93).

And while the above structure of behavior certainly was not

adamant in Fox society, it is current and present as a sort of guideline for behavior which most Mesquakie will grow into and understand as the way that things are done in this particular family relationship. It would mean considerable trouble if a Mesquakie attempted to explain the above to most Whites, and so it would be with most of his familial relationships and customs which he simply grows into without question or even understanding.

#### Mesquakie Oral Literature

The Mesquakie have a kind of oral literature, a body of stories and myths, often didactic, which is handed down verbally from generation to generation. It is necessary at this point to understand what seems an essential difference between the attitude of the Mesquakie and most Whites. The Bible (or a bible) tends to contain the sacred literature of Whites, while other literature is not considered sacred, though perhaps "good" as it stresses values found in the Good Book. But as William Jones put it in his work called Fox Texts, printed in 1907, among the things the Mesquakie

...hold with deep veneration is this very lore herein recorded. They regard it as sacred and give it a fitting place in their scheme of things. To hold it up to ridicule would be as profane as for a Christian to mock his Bible (54, p. 2).



In the mythology, reality and witchcraft intermingle almost without a hitch. Sexual relations, thievery, distasteful conduct, magic, and symbolism all prove a bit much for most non-Indian readers when they mingle in what seems a kind of potpourri. In the work entitled "The Youth that Married Many Wives" for instance, a strong young man appeared throughout the village and badgered parents of young girls to send their daughters along with him. Having collected some twenty "brides" in this fashion, he had sexual relations with them; and, as the people gathered and closed in on him, he suddenly disappeared, thus proving to the satisfaction of all that he was something of a supernatural creature (54, pp. 41-67). One of the more understandable stories for Whites is one in which hunters chase a bear into the sky, catch him there and butcher him. They then use a pile of maple and sumac branches for a worktable. And it is for this reason that the maple and the sumac turn red in the fall, due to the blood of the bear that the hunters had butchered in the sky. "The square of stars is the bear [the constellation called the "Big Dipper"], the three running behind him are the hunters, and the little one, that you can hardly see, is the little dog, named Hold Tight" (62, pp. 57-58).

In some myths the mixture of Christian teachings with Indian myth is very evident. In the "how" and "why" story

of the Painted Turtle, a character called Jesus Woman goes out with the Lothario Turtle, and pretends to lie down with him. But Jesus Woman instead casts a spell and replaces himself [or herself] with a log swarming with ants. Turtle is in a bad way with the biting of the ants, and then the Jesus Woman changes back to his [or her] original form "before Turtle's eyes."

'Now,' he said, 'you've made enough trouble for all the people. You've upset the village long enough. From now on, people will know what you are because with all your fancy paint you'll crawl around on your belly. And I'll leave the paint on you, too, so that every one will recognize you' (62, pp. 126-127).

The story above was one "to be told to young men, as a warning of what may happen if they act like turtles."

Some myths are not buried in historical obscurity. In a Sauk myth a young man was careless about giving his dying father a drink of water. The father came back for a drink in the form of an owl, and the man Joe, ignored his father [the owl] with "He's dead, isn't he?" Prior to this the wife of the man, Nina, had given the old man water "whenever that choked, owl's cry came...." Later while Joe was in the yard with a team, an owl swooped over the yard and

The horses spooked. Joe was thrown between the shafts of the wagon, and by the time the horses were stopped by the yard fence and Nina reached him, he was hanging limply upside down by his broken leg, unconscious.

'I told you,' Nina muttered over and over as she worked to free him. 'I told you. I said something bad would happen if you didn't set out the glass of water' [for the owl] (62, pp. 203-204).

### Conclusion of Traditional Education

There is a tendency to belittle or reject the view of life that places dead souls with owls and mixes hunters in the sky and the red leaves of maples. But within the context of Mesquakie life they would make sense enough. Man walking on water, man rising from the grave, man being swallowed by a whale, seas parting-- somehow these get a preferred treatment in white society. Looked at in an understanding light there is something of poetry, particularly Whitman ["what is the grass...I think it is the uncut hair of graves..."], and beauty in the following:

With Indians everything is spiritual. Look around--Mother Earth - the trees - even these weeds. Those are the hair of Mother Earth. This red stone we have around here--that's a good man. The Great Spirit is saving him for the next world. There will be four worlds. The first was made of fire, the second of water. This is the third. For all these we have history. We don't know about the next one. The morning star is man too (93, p. 2141).

But explanation of the beauty of the concepts and the implications of the rich spirited world around us is difficult when it is done in one's second language. And the Mesquakie most familiar with the mythology, religion, and

medicine would likely have Mesquakie as their mother tongue. The task becomes almost hopelessly complicated when the listener is imbued with a rather compartmentalized culture in which empirical science and spiritual matters have not intermingled much for the last century. As one young man stressed to this writer, the Mesquakie do not have a religion as "you" understand it. They have a "way of life." Of this life the religion is an integral part [meaning that it has more practical effect than most white religions] and the most important part. Then following religion in order of their importance to their way of life come: Social concerns, political concerns, and lastly economic concerns.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly not all Mesquakie would attend clan ceremonials or emphasize the spiritual nature of "Mother Earth," but they would be familiar with these ceremonials and attitudes, understand them, and be for the most part thoroughly at home. This fact contrasts with the general response to activities "such as school affairs, matters of health, and law and order" over which the Mesquakie were often "torn by mutual hostility, fear, ignorance, self-pity, and a feeling of incompetence" (39, p. 96).

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

## EFFORTS TO CAPITALIZE ON BEING "INDIAN"

The fascination with all things "Indian" on the part of the Whites has been a long-standing phenomenon in this country. Witness the numbers who grew up playing "cowboy and Indian," the candidates for public office who posed in Indian headress (including Coolidge), even cigar store advertisements in the form of Indian statues. The Mesquakie have been duly exposed to this American penchant for commercializing on their fellows' curiosity.

As early as 1842, one Jim Smith, a former miller at one of the mills set up for Indian use near Agency, took a group of the Sac and Fox with him to exhibit through areas further east. This caused consternation on the part of Agent Beach, who felt that the Indians were in danger of being abandoned as well as exploited (6, Beach to Chambers, July 16, 1842). In 1890 "...aspirants for political honors and preferment" attempted to use the settlement Indians for their own advantage, ignoring "the good of the service" [The Indian Bureau] (3, Green, 1890). In a July 4th (1870) celebration at Orford [a name later changed to Montour] twenty dollars was paid to the "Redskins" for a "Musquakie Indian War Dance" (93, p. 1840 [Tama Citizen, July 7, 1870]). Members of the tribe were popular at fairs and celebrations around the turn of the century, such as the Keosauqua County Fair where several families got \$125 and rations and "won \$15 on footraces"

(93, p. 1861). In the early thirties, a Fox passed as "a full-blooded Sioux" at the Chicago World's Fair (93, p. 62). Throughout decades of this kind of activity, the Mesquakie participants maintained dignity and were well received overall.

The commercialization based on things "Indian" has continued for settlement members into the present time. The obvious manifestation of this has been the Pow Wow where Governors, Senators, Congressmen and Mayors have taken pains to appear. But there are other efforts in this area, rarely as successful as the annual Pow Wow, some of which have died out and others which have changed form. These latter will be taken up first.

#### The Fox Band

Getting its first beginnings in 1906, a Fox Band, made up of settlement members, operated on a touring basis, largely in summers, from 1923 to 1941. Returnees from boarding schools gave the band something of a boost in 1923. The men from the schools had learned to play instruments and had acquired a bit of white organizational patterns as well. The band was a yearly feature of the Pow Wow. Difficulties arose among the members, and this in addition to the drafting of some of the band members in 1942 seems to have ended the Fox Band. The band was well remembered

when the Chicago students arrived in 1948, but efforts to revive interest and get it going again, headed by two of the Tax party, were ineffective. The students ran into a kind of passive stickiness. One Indian was always going "to see about" the instruments which were kept by another Mesquakie, but somehow he just never did. There is music at the Pow Wows now, but it is sung (38, pp. 138-139; 93, pp. 665-70).

#### Silversmithing or Jewelry-Making

Unlike basketwork and weaving, silversmithing is not an ancient Indian art. It started among the Navajos "some-time around the Civil War," probably coming into that tribe through contact with the Mexicans (24, July 1, 1973, Sec. E, p. 1 and p. 4). By 1880 many of the Mesquakie knew how "to make Jewelry" and they bought "silver in sheets for this purpose" (12, p. 133). There is a possibility that news of silversmithing among Indians came back with Joe Tesson who spent time in New Mexico some six months after his service in the Civil War. Four tribal members were noted as "jeweler" in Ward's 1905 genealogy (97, pp. 195-219, see footnotes). Mention has been made above of Principal Benedict's use of a silversmith in the latter thirties and as late as 1951 a Pete Morgan was still active

in the art (93, p. 2065). But currently the silversmith is only a memory on the settlement. Turquoise jewelry is sold at the Pow Wow, but it is machine made, stamped "sterling silver." There is currently a great demand for original Indian jewelry with necklaces running over five-hundred dollars in some instances (24, July 1, 1973, Sec. E, p. 4). Some Mesquakie may be taking jewelry-making or silversmithing in government Indian schools, and work with silver wire has been begun in the art department (art is a most popular course with Indian students at Tama High for at least the last two decades) of South Tama High School. Perhaps the "jeweler" will reappear among the Mesquakie.

#### Catering to Tourists

A current resident of Toledo, Iowa,<sup>1</sup> recalls that when he was a boy in the early twenties, Highway 30 ran by the Presbyterian Mission and the Mesquakie Day School. Indians could be seen dressed in native costume in the tiny community whose single sidewalk is still visible. Cars would stop, and tourists would attempt to take pictures of the Indians, but the Indians avoided the camera. However, when the tourists took the advice of the then young man to "give em money," poses were held and duly recorded on the Kodaks of the day.

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<sup>1</sup>Ron Harrison, Marshalltown. Personal interview. 1973.



The settlement's location on the Lincoln Highway appears to make the tourist trade a natural means of income for the Mesquakie. But with tourists and commercialization could come a destruction of a kind of refuge from white society. Two notable efforts were made to solve the dilemma. One of these was engineered by a Scottish anthropologist identified in the local agency files as "Critchen." He found a philanthropist ready to give 211 acres to the settlement in order to set up "a traditional Mesquakie village" by an artificial lake since "this is what the tourists come to see...not a few frame houses hidden amongst the trees, but something which flavors of the romantic past." Critchen felt that with this plan, higher prices could be obtained for "Mesquakie crafts." He also had an idea on how to avoid the possibility (circa 1939) of the proposed promotion plan from becoming "the monopoly of certain families" (22). But the acquisition of two hundred odd acres and the proposal for the building of a Mesquakie village for the eyes of the tourists were rejected.

More direct action was taken by the Civilian Conservation Corps when in 1941 they erected what came to be known as the "stone house." On land along old Highway 30 in the southern portion of the settlement a limestone building was erected by CCC labor, about fifty feet in length by twenty-five in width. With a nearby "well" of the same

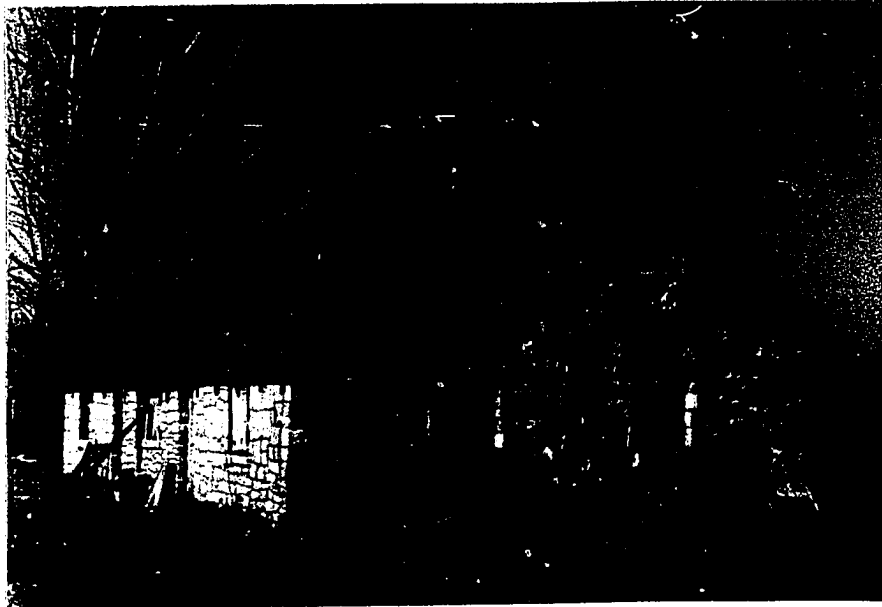


Figure 11. The old stone house



Figure 12. The home of Tamacraft

material it was placed on an acre or more of ground. It had a somewhat rustic appearance and good access lanes to the highway. The stone house had been intended for Mesquakie use of some kind--a gas station, souvenir stand, food sales, or some combination of those. But while the stone house location was used as a spot for sales of Indian and "woolworth" goods to the tourists in the late forties and early fifties, no permanent and organized arrangement on the use of the location has ever been made (38, p. 127). The relocation of Highway 30 (circa 1955) to the north of the settlement precluded use of the stone house as a souvenir stand. It rests today in a state of disuse, though in restorable condition. Within the last several years a Mesquakie artist group has considered using the location but so far nothing has come of the idea. Aside from the sight of the stone house along the now little-used portion of highway, no results from its having been built are evident.

#### Tamacraft

During their early years at the settlement the Tax Chicago group furnished constant reminders to settlement residents of the possibility of the disappearance of their native culture (93, pp. 410-411, and numerous others). This was done through such questions as "Do you want to see

the language disappear?" Along with this constant questioning, seemingly directed toward developing an awareness of the Mesquakie of their culture and of their desire to maintain this culture, there were less subtle pressures from some members of the Tax party toward such things as cooperative farming projects. There was a search on for a communal economic venture that would not disrupt settlement life, and which would at the same time furnish a centering element for tribal members and contribute to the monetary well-being of the community.

As early as 1949 truck gardening, the growing of berries, and the operation of a gas station were among the things which had been considered for active promotion by the Tax group (93, p. 881). Finally after six years on the settlement a project was begun (with funds from a foundation) which had some promise of contributing to native culture and fitting with settlement life and being an economic asset as well. "Tamacraft" was begun.

The main items produced by Tamacraft were ceramic tiles, six inches square. These featured designs by the Mesquakie artist Charles Pushetonequa, a former student of an Indian art school in New Mexico. Under the guidance of Robert Rietz, one of the mainstays of the Chicago group, a small quonset building was obtained at Ames, Iowa, for ten dollars and trucked to the settlement. Here a kiln and

other manufacturing apparatus were set up at a location across from the Presbyterian mission. The promotion of the tiles included assistance from the Federated Women's Club of Iowa, most members of which purchased tiles. Production methods included the adding of colors, one at a time, to the tiles, using a silk screen process. This involved a good deal of hand labor. The project caught on well enough so that by the fall of 1956, two years after its beginning, one of Rietz's tasks was to "widen and routinize the Tamacraft Operation...." Intentions were to hire a manager and to open a retail outlet on or near the settlement (38, p. 331). Christmas cards, again featuring Mesquakie designs, were added to the line of goods. Some difficulties were encountered, such as the interference of native religious observances with the working times of key production personnel, but the driving force of Rietz prevailed, and Tamacraft was accepted by the community. Even an Indian opponent of the Chicago group added Tamacraft to the wares he sold at various gatherings where he spoke.<sup>1</sup>

The Chicago group was enthusiastic about Tamacraft. They felt that "the major contribution Tamacraft can make to the community is not at all an economic one." It was looked on as educative, as a builder of self-confidence

<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview, 1971.

among the Mesquakie. It was to serve as a model of Indian accomplishment. It could become a business venture welcomed by Whites and a common ground for the development of community relations, both within the Mesquakie community and also within the greater White and Indian community combined (38, p. 343).

Despite high hopes for Tamacraft it simply died out. In 1961 "Under the present system of operation, Tamacraft is [was] not too successful" (30). The publication of The Documentary History of the Fox Project in 1960 had removed most of the influence of the Chicago group, and Rietz, the strong guiding hand of the project, had left "the Field station" in January of 1958 (38, p. 334). Without the energy and impetus furnished by Rietz, the Tamacraft operation was unable to maintain itself.

In a rather ironic resurrection, tiles are still ordered from "Tama Indian Crafts" at the Mesquakie settlement. The building and equipment used originally in 1954 are held and operated by one individual who "kind of inherited" them.<sup>1</sup> Tiles are produced sporadically to fill orders over the country. But the communal enterprise is now a private venture by a Mesquakie who lives on land next to the settlement grounds. He hires some settlement members to

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<sup>1</sup>An interview with a settlement resident. 1972.

assist him with production. It is a sideline. The man's main income and support come from a job at a Marshalltown manufacturing plant. As an educative and fulfilling communal business venture, Tamacraft appears very much finished in 1973.

#### The Pow Wow

The Pow Wow at the settlement, usually a four day affair with public admissions to afternoon and evening performances, has taken place almost every year since the first one was held in 1913. Two years were missed during World War II.

Prior to 1913 the Meskwaki Indians had met annually in what became known as "field days." These were more or less spontaneous affairs, contests, and a general social gathering. The neighboring whites found these field days colorful and highly interesting, and started attending in increasing numbers (90, p. 263).

Until 1921 the August Pow Wow was held at a summer village site except for 1915 when "Heavy rains and flood waters ...sent the Indians scurrying for higher ground." Since 1922 the Pow Wow has been held at a site just off old Highway 30. This is known "traditionally" as a battleground where Mesquakie and Sioux managed to kill a total of twenty-five participants in 1839. The use of the present site (save for relocation when the Iowa River was in flood as it was in 1972) was formalized in 1937 so that the "Sac and

Fox Pow Wow committee shall be permitted" use of the grounds for the annual celebration "provided that no games of chance or acts of misconduct shall be permitted" and that "the Government shall be permitted to place improvements on the Pow Wow grounds as it sees fit." And the agreement was to be "binding forever" unless there was willful violation of the agreement at which time the agreement was to become null and void and the Government "at its discretion, without further ceremony," could destroy or remove any improvements (90, pp. 261-262). This action, presumably done under policy directed by the Johnson O'Malley Act of 1934, would indicate that the government wished to have a few strings attached to the self-determination of the tribe.

Until 1924 the Pow Wow was a somewhat "spontaneous affair" which did not involve large numbers of people. Also there was a good deal of "white" assistance at the beginnings of the Pow Wow. One Joe Svacina, a Tama harness shop proprietor, was connected with the venture for its first thirty years and "guided and directed the Indians in the business aspects" of the Pow Wow. Also one Edgar Harlan, "curator of the Historical Department of Iowa," assisted in promoting the Pow Wow in the year 1919 and afterwards. He gave talks at the Pow Wow, explaining aspects of Mesquakie life to visitors and was particularly useful in obtaining speakers of note, "such as governors, senators, and clergy-



men" (90, p. 266).

A formal constitution was instituted for the Pow Wow Committee in 1925. It is couched in largely general terms, providing that the Pow Wow will be given

for the benefit of the whole tribe. It is understood that the committee will form rules and regulations governing same, of which some may be changed from time to time, as the committee sees fit. The fundamental principles of morality will reign supreme at all Pow Wows (90, p. 267).

Jobs taken on by the 1925 committee [in a somewhat typical "white" phenomenon, committee members of the Pow Wow often end up with the lion's share of the labor along with the position] included "ceremonial," "interpreting," and "athletic director" as well as the more usual "traffic," "powwow grounds," and "chief clerk." Some problems faced in earlier powwows are implied by the following, taken from the 1925 Statement of Purpose.

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 (90, p. 269).

Indian dances and prizes for the best Indian baby have remained with the Pow Wow for the last half century. Aside from these two features there have been a number of changes

reflecting the times and/or the appeal of box office. The earlier Pow Wows had many of the elements of the county fairs found in Iowa throughout the twenties, but often with a distinctly Indian emphasis. A half century ago (1925) prizes for footraces and tug of war contests were listed along with bow and arrow contests and a LaCrosse "ball throwing contest," and one dollar each was awarded to the members of the winning LaCrosse team. Exhibits of grains and handiwork familiar to fair-goers of the thirties and forties included awards for the "Best quart of Indian dried corn," "Most kinds of plants used for medicine," and "Best mat for wickiup" (90, p. 271). Perhaps one of the better ways for many midwesterners to understand the Pow Wow is to look on it as a kind of Mesquakie fair, a mixture of commercial facets of their existence with the traditional forms of entertainment and ceremony.

While it is often stressed that the Pow Wow features tradition and ceremony that can't be changed,<sup>1</sup> entertainment over the years has featured athletic contests between Mesquakie and other Indian tribal teams (in LaCrosse) or white teams (Baseball). Pony races, a race between an Indian pony and Ford car, a greased pig contest, and a high diver have served as drawing cards at various times. In 1939

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<sup>1</sup>George Youngbear, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

"Visitors could dance [on a portable dance floor] to the music of Mike Vavra and his Bohemians, or Ralph Slade and his... 'Sweetest Band in Iowa Land'" (90, p. 275).

In the 1970s the Pow Wow is still very much a part of Mesquakie life. Stands are set up by some Mesquakie about the grounds featuring manufactured jewelry, souvenirs, beadwork, food and refreshments including the Indian "fried bread" (formerly called "squaw bread"). Changes are noticeable to older county residents. A Marshalltown man in his seventies

remembers that at his first pow wow 55 years ago, "They wouldn't allow us to take pictures with our cameras. No cameras were allowed on the grounds. Those were the days of the pony races when women mostly sat in the background. The show is much better now" (52).

Not only is picture-taking encouraged today, but television cameras are brought in and the Pow Wow is seen over Iowa television networks. The author noted ten illustrated feature stories in the Des Moines Register and the Marshalltown Times Republican as the time for the Pow Wow neared in August of 1972. Publicity also included a Mesquakie dance through the halls of the State Legislature in Des Moines, this being featured on television. Spectators approach the 20,000 figure yearly. The Pow Wow at Tama has become a significant part of settlement life, stressing the uniqueness of the Mesquakie. Only Indians and guests of honor,

such as Iowa's governor, are invited into the central area (aside from photographers), and the singing of "The Mesquakie National Anthem" at the raising of the flag (while small Mesquakie boys dash among the crowd) makes the visitor aware of a national, group feeling of which he is not a portion nor invited to be. Commercialized and promoted, it is still a matter of pride to most Mesquakie. It is the most successful and accepted of the various ventures which tried to capitalize on "Indianness." It is considered to be a beneficial entity by White and Indian alike.

The Pow Wow was closely studied by the Tax group. It was an example of the Mesquakie pulling together for a common goal without obvious divisions. It was accepted, successful, and came off without any strong leader asserting himself directly. There was a good deal of "white" assistance during its beginnings, but as the white assistance disappeared (no white is now seen near the ticket sales) the Pow Wow went on and if anything it was improved. Unlike the now defunct Tamacraft it has provided both a settlement area of cohesiveness and a link with the larger community that surrounds it.

The 1972 Pow Wow furnished an example of the community interest in the event. The grounds at the usual site with permanent seating for over 2,000 were flooded. A nearby

camping resort owner furnished an off-settlement field on which to hold the Pow Wow. Parking arrangements were managed in an adjoining pasture. Crews came out, set up bleachers and lighting on brief notice; and the Pow Wow was held for the local patrons, out-of-state visitors, and a few from such places as England and the Netherlands. The Pow Wow has had the kind of acceptance and success that the backers of other Mesquakie projects have only been able to wish for.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EFFORTS AMONG THE MESQUAKIE  
Nineteenth Century Work

In 1834 the "Reverend Cutting Marsh...traveled up the Des Moines River and tried to establish a mission school among the Sac and Fox. A Fox chief, Poweshiek, was the only one of the tribes' members to show much interest. He wished "two or three of his young men to be trained as interpreters" (2, pp. 21-22[from Sabin, Edwin L., The Making of Iowa, 1900]). In 1939, over a century later, the missionary at the Presbyterian Mission next to the settlement reported that two Mesquakie girls "expressed desire to attend Bible School at Boone, Iowa." And he said that "This is the first time any of this tribe has made an effort to secure a Christian education" (5, p. 40). Since many Mesquakie had attended boarding schools where Christian religions were taught, the missionary's statement might be open to question, but all in all it would seem a solid indication of Mesquakie interest in Christianity up until 1935 and to a degree into the 1970s.

The Indians had difficulty in separating the white man's religion from the general activities of white men. A Reverend Duvall (who died at 44 in 1874) had run a mission school on the Kansas Reservation in 1863. His replacement spoke of traders who customarily "formed an alliance with an

Indian squaw and for the time being had a housekeeper" (42, p. 55) and later had children. In the words of Mrs. Duvall "one scarcely realizes the drawbacks to be found at an Indian Agency, so many unprincipled white men there for gain that the poor Indian saw only their vicious habits ..." (42, p. 66).

The government was aware of the poor conditions in and around Indian agencies, indicated in part in the preceding paragraph, and looked to the churches to find a source of honest agents. "The inauguration of church appointments following the Civil War resulted from the disreputable character of many contemporary Indian officials," (79, pp. 28-29). The appointment of agents selected by various church bodies began in 1870. Pursuant to this policy of conscious church influence in agencies (not to finish running its course until 1880, its end brought on in part by resistance of Bureau officials (79, pp. 37-38)) a Tama County Union Missionary Society was formed in 1871 "with the purpose of carrying out the Christianization of the Fox" (38, p. 72).

In 1872 Reverend A. R. Howbert, a former Lutheran college president from the east, was appointed Sac and Fox Indian Agent at Tama (5, p. 29). A "small house, tool house, shop, office" [apparently one building] was set up for the Reverend Howbert on the settlement. He found the Indians neglected, ignorant and "degraded" (36, pp. 559-596). He

also found an intense Mesquakie interest in religion, but unfortunately, as Howbert saw it, the interest did not include Christianity. Having failed to interest the Indians in religious exercises on the settlement, and having failed to interest them in the rudiments of animal husbandry and agriculture as well [see above], Reverend Howbert left the reservation in 1875.

Serious efforts at converting the Mesquakie subsided for a few years, but in 1883 the Iowa Ladies Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church became interested in the spiritual welfare of the settlement residents. "The Women's Board of Foreign Missions of the Northwest" appointed one Anna Skea as missionary. An attempt to get the mission located on the settlement at the original government building was blocked by the Indians, so other arrangements had to be made. The local Presbyterian minister at Tama helped Miss Skea set up a mission room in town complete with "charts, pictures, an organ, and a sewing machine." The sewing machine was most successful, and the music also went over well enough. Only Christianity proved difficult for those Indians who came to observe and enjoy the offerings (5, p. 29).

Miss Skea continued her work at and near the settlement until 1895. She cooperated with people such as Allie B. Busby in doing things for the general good of the Indians. There is no record of her response to the "immorality" and



"polygamy" that disturbed Busby along with the universality of the tobacco habit (12, p. 217), and whether or not Miss Skea had anything to do with Agent Lesser's stopping Whites "from going on the reservation to run horses, gamble, and drink whiskey, especially on Sunday..." (36, p. 588) is likewise unknown. Anna Skea was the missionary when "in 1891, a commodious and substantial mission home was erected one-half mile east of the present mission..." (5, p. 27). It was at this location that Stoops and others held classes [see above] for a few years.

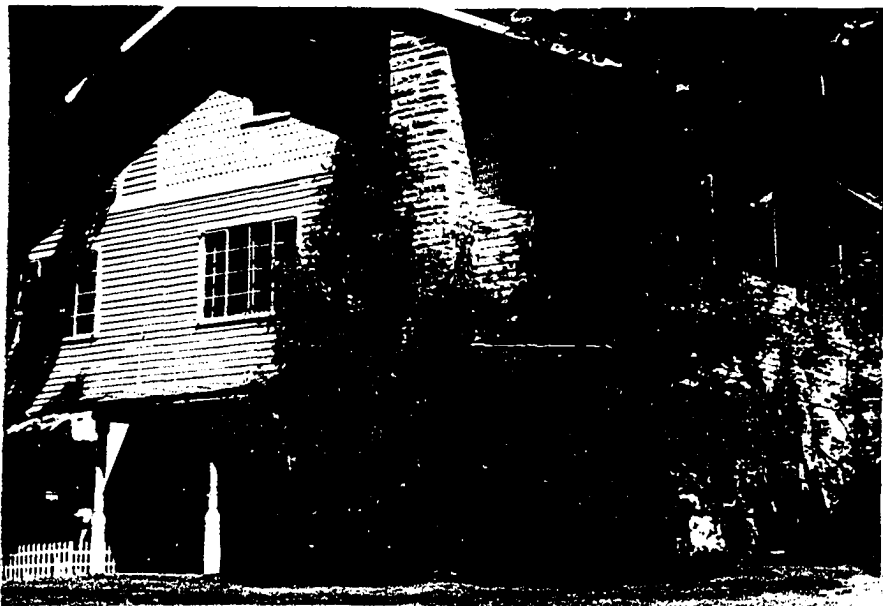


Figure 13. First Presbyterian mission house

A Mr. Reaugh arrived in 1895 at the mission home. This being the period of Rebok's activity in the opening of the boarding school, it is doubtful that Reaugh had a very positive climate to work in. There was little response to his efforts. In 1900 he closed the mission, feeling that as the government school could take care of the educational needs of the Mesquakie so could the various churches of Tama and Toledo minister to their spiritual requirements (5, p. 27).

The nineteenth century closed with more Indian frame houses on the settlement (2) than converted Indians and a kind of assumption that as the Indians were educated in the boarding school that Christianity would, naturally, take over. Most Whites near the turn of the century simply assumed that assimilation was inevitable for the Mesquakie, and part of that assimilation would have been the then accepted forms of Christianity. The perpetuation of the native or traditional religion was simply not deemed plausible.

They have been beaten; and they are now a dying people. Their blood may be mingled with that of their conquerors and thus their life may be in some measure perpetuated. But their ancient beliefs and institutions are passing away forever [circa 1903] (70, [E. Sidney Hartland in the Introduction]).

Twentieth Century Elements

Continued work of the Presbyterians

Concern among the Cedar Rapids Presbytery for the Mesquakie "who now had no Christian work among them" brought Elizabeth Campbell to Tama in 1903, where she became the mainstay of the Presbyterian mission from 1903 to 1908. Assured by Pushetonequa that no harm would come to her, she stayed on despite a marked lack of welcome. Eventually Miss Campbell was "accepted," but none of the Mesquakie were converted during her stay (5, pp. 29-30). In 1906 the Presbyterians built the present missionary home "just off" the settlement for a then substantial sum of over \$4,500. Miss Campbell contributed over \$900 of that figure. Miss Campbell's sincerity went far beyond the contribution of money, as her records for the year 1906 indicated.

5,599 visitors at home (1 year)  
 697 home visits  
 425 medicines dispensed  
 114 Bible explained and read to persons  
 2,013 lessons in reading and music  
 (5, p. 39).

It is hoped that the huge numbers of visitors at home were due to the newness of the mission house. Work with the Bible would appear to have been a most peripheral portion of the work of the missionary. The beginnings of the Fox Band seem to have sprung from the educative work with reading and music.

Reverend R. G. Smith and his wife began work at the mission in 1906, eventually taking charge of it. The Smiths had a long tenure at the mission, staying until 1934. Smith worked with the boarding school and later at the sanatorium at Toledo when he could, trying for conversions to the Christian faith. In 1929 "afternoon services at the Sanatorium include praise service, Sabbath School Lesson and Sermon" (5, p. 39). The missionaries also furnished "such religious services as the Indians will permit" at the Fox and Mesquakie Day Schools (37, p. 257). In 1922 this amounted to one-half hour per week (58, p. 215). Smith worked less on the band than had Campbell and more on the whiskey problem. In 1910 "We have prosecuted eighty and one-hundred 'boot-leggers' and saloon keepers" (5, p. 39).

Resistance on the part of the tribe was constant, though not overt. In 1919 Mrs. Smith reported that

They are having their corn, beans and various dances every day--especially Sabbath. They used to have their dances on week days, but ever since we began trying to have services they have had their biggest feasts and dances on Sabbath (5, p. 39).

The building of the United Presbyterian Indian Mission Church took place in 1921, the dedication coming in January of 1922. This did not change the stance of the great majority of the Mesquakie toward Christianity however. The one major successful event sponsored by the mission over the long tenure of Reverend Smith and beyond seems to have been the

annual Christmas dinner. Missionaries would work "for days" in preparation for the celebration, and up to 200 of the tribe would appear. The "recurrent expenditure" for this affair over the years ran from fifty to seventy-five dollars (5, p. 30 and p. 39), but it did seem to have developed into a local tradition.

In 1934 a Reverend Patterson succeeded Reverend Smith as the Presbyterian missionary. He was to remain, as had Smith, for over twenty years. At first the outlook was somewhat bleak. The new missionary was met on his arrival by a delegation from the Christian Reformed Church. A white farmer member of this group had begun a bit of evangelism on his own with the Indians, and the Christian Reformed delegation seriously suggested to Patterson that he simply leave the field to them (93, p. 791). He stayed, however, finding a large Fox Band at the settlement, but a small congregation at the mission, due in part to the activities of the Drum Society [see below] (93, p. 782). Going to work with determination, Patterson promptly visited all the homes of Mesquakie to be found on or near the settlement.

The new missionary was a practical as well as a dedicated man. When an Indian man was quite ill on the reservation and did not respond to the work of medicine men, a white doctor was called. The missionary accompanied the doctor, prayed, and when a great recovery took place Patter-

son had a faithful Christian for the mission (93, pp. 1158-1159). In 1939 "for the first time we were able to give a Christmas package to every family on the Reservation." Every family was the recipient of "towels, wash cloths, and soap..." (5, p. 40). In 1944, in addition to Sabbath services in English, midweek "home" services were held, and at these the use of the Mesquakie language was encouraged (5, p. 40). Playground equipment purchased in October of 1944 for use near the mission was "a help" because "Children like to come early to Junior meetings" to play on swings, but on signal they "leave their play happily" for chapel and meetings. So "The Little Foxes (our Junior M.S.) [M.S. = Missionary Society] are up in membership" (5, p. 40). In addition to the foregoing Patterson promoted the idea of getting a Mesquakie to the Cook Christian Training School at Phoenix, and he took some pride in the role of the mission throughout the period when Mesquakie education was in a state of flux prior to the opening of the consolidated school of 1938, feeling that the mission had supported what was best for the Indians and had done good service in encouraging education (93, p. 791).

Patterson's theology appeared "fundamental" to the Tax group from Chicago. The "usual emphasis" on such matters as smoking and "occasional cussing" caused notice among the relatively sophisticated students. It was also re-

ported that "He teaches that there shouldn't be dancing, and that women shouldn't wear lipstick, women shouldn't smoke, women should have lots of children" (93, p. 1198). While such attitudes seemed unnecessarily stringent to an acculturated Haskell graduate at mid-century, they would not have been looked on as strange in many Iowa churches throughout the 1930s. Toward the Indian religions Patterson's attitude was negative.

We find a few who still worship the "Sacred Bundle," a worship that seems to us to be practically idolatry and that has in it an element of animal sacrifice in the "Dog Feast." A few still practice the ceremonial dances with the beating of the drums. Some belong to the group that use the drug "peyote" in a perverted form of Christianity (5, p. 25).

In 1949, Louis Mitchell, a Mesquakie Indian from the settlement, took over as missionary. His first language had been Mesquakie. He had attended the day schools on the settlement, Flandreau, Genoa, and finished the last two years at Tama High School as well as having attended the religious training school in Arizona. Patterson had left the settlement area on pleasant terms, and while attendance at services rarely exceeded thirty-five the relationship of the mission to the settlement was a good one for the most part. Mitchell was in hopes that "hearing the gospel in their own language," the response to Christianity by the Mesquakie would be improved (7, p. 7).

Mitchell's first sermon, in English but with "Mesquakie type constructions" went well enough. When a passing train drowned out the service briefly he used an analogy between the noise of the train and the forces of evil that keep hammering away at attempted good works (93, p. 229). But difficulties came about on the settlement, particularly over attempts to close the school. The presence of the Tax group and their backing of the Oldbears while Youngbears tended to be more aligned with the mission did nothing to alleviate the problems. Finally "political and religious factions arose and Mr. Mitchell resigned very discouraged" (7, p. 17) in 1955.

Following a period of temporary missionaries, Reverend and Mrs. Park came to the mission in 1957. He was a medical doctor, his wife was active, and a rather full schedule was maintained and large efforts were put forth. In 1959 programs included the Missionary Society, piano lessons, sewing, embroidery and "special services provided in the case of sickness, sorrow, distress or accident. The missionaries are on call twenty-four hours a day..." (5, p. 41). The mission had a steady run of visitors. Some came to watch television. Many Indian homes at this time were without water or electricity and "the Parks share their telephone-- and even their bathtubs." The main use of the phone was



for calling the taxi (there were only three telephones on the settlement at this time, "one at the school, a second at Tama Crafts, and a third at the home of the deputy sheriff" (7, p. 13)). The bathtubs were for use by "young girls active in the church" (1, pp. 41-42).

Despite purchase of a Volkswagen bus to provide transportation to church for interested Mesquakie and the rather complete program carried on by the Parks, attendance at the mission services remained near a level of thirty. In 1959 a typical congregation would include fifteen children, ten adolescents and six adults (5, p. 40). A question arose within the parent church body as to whether a mission "which has thus far produced such meagre results statistically" (5, Foreword) should continue. Also a close look at Indian participation in decisions was indicated.

The Presbyterian Mission might study to see if it is democratic in its work with the Indians. How often do Presbyterian leaders consult the Mesquakie to see if they are satisfied with the program of the church? Are the various groups permitted to help run their organizations? How often is the will of the leaders imposed upon the Indians? Does some group or committee at a distant point decide what is best for the Sac and Fox? (5, p. 18)

The work of the Tax group from Chicago was closely examined to see whether or not something could be gained by Presbyterians from the students' rather extensive efforts. Some past contention was indicated by the following from Baker's comprehensive 1960 report on the mission.

At least the Presbyterian missionary can help publicize such programs as the Tama-Craft and the college scholarship program (5, p. 20).

Despite the relatively small attendance at church services and difficulties with the Tax group, the Presbyterian Mission Church remained. Its continuance was justified on grounds other than theological or evangelical. In 1959 "Over 800 Indian Americans live in the settlement...of this number 27 names are on the roll of the congregation while but 19 live in the vicinity" (5, p. 27). With very few men as "communicants" and a pattern of young Mesquakie dropping out as they came to maturity, no substantial increase in the number of Mesquakie who attended the church was foreseen (5, p. 46). There was, however, a feeling that a healthy "leavening effect" from the mission existed, that it was an influence for the good through its presence and its example. Both Whites and Indians wished the mission church to continue (5, p. 43).

Many young Mesquakies have gone to college and into useful life due to its help. Many parents acknowledge that their high ideals for home life and their children [the children's high ideals etc.] came from the mission. Even those who do not belong want it continued because they like the social gatherings and constructive influence it brings (7, p. 18).

And it is as a general good influence that the church exists today (1973). The attendance still centers at thirty. The numbers of adult males is very small. Young Mesquakie

still tend to leave the church as they reach maturity. But the service function of the church continues. The Christmas dinner with a following program has changed to a pot-luck affair, but the attendance has remained high, from over one-hundred up to two hundred. The writer was present several years ago when a flooded out Indian family was being moved temporarily into the basement of the 1921 church. The telephone rings often (three times during a 1973 interview of one-half hour) as people wish to speak with or leave messages for various Mesquakie. One caller wished to talk to Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ to arrange an interview with the famous dancing family for the Des Moines Register. The present missionary mentioned that "Pioneer [seed corn company with a local plant] called three times Friday" leaving messages for Mesquakie relative to detasseling developments.<sup>1</sup>

Some changes have taken place. While the mission was formally organized as a church in 1942, it was not legally incorporated and there was but one Indian elder as late as 1960, the others on the board being "provisional" elders [Whites]. A change in the local custom of the church allowing women as elders in 1967 allowed a board of Indians for the first time. A new mission church building has been erected on the site of the "university house" where the Tax

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<sup>1</sup>Laverne Seth, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

group had resided. It was consciously designed to allow for its use as a day care center, and with the help of a federally funded program it has been successful as such for several years. While the church simply rents the space to the day care center, the local missionary is glad to have it there and to have a place "where community things like this can happen."<sup>1</sup>

The mission is not as denominationally conscious as it was formerly. A Roman Catholic team of five or more young women has assisted them during the last three summers. Lutherans, Methodists and others have assisted as volunteer helpers. Graduate students and seminary students (including one from Germany) help run the two-week Bible school in the summer and assist with other efforts of the mission. Some funds (including \$1800 from a young Lutheran group) have been forthcoming as well. All this is welcomed by the missionary as evidence of the essential unity of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

For some time most of the Indians have called "themselves Presbyterian when they are admitted to a hospital or other institution" (5, p. 42). While this can be looked on as a simple way to get past the question of "What religion?" on admittance, the current missionary says, "in

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<sup>1</sup>Laverne Seth, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

a sense I think they all expect me to come visit them" in the hospital, and also the traditionally religious Mesquakie appreciate prayer even though they may not subscribe to the religion of the man who gives it.

The Presbyterian Mission has lasted some three generations, becoming a legally incorporated church in 1967, though far from a self-supporting one (individual contributions averaged less than twelve dollars per member for the year 1960). It appears to be an accepted portion of the community by the majority of the Mesquakie, although the church adherents are relatively few. The tenure of several of the missionaries has been long; Lavern Seth is now in his thirteenth year. The contribution of the church seems to be more social than religious, furnishing a local community gathering place where most activities have a largely Mesquakie appearance. Although the success of the Presbyterian Church in its relation to the Mesquakies is quite limited, especially in an evangelical sense, it has been by far the most successful of the white religious groups who have made efforts with the tribe.

#### The Open Bible Mission

The Tax group found "two subgroups" of Christianity when they came to the settlement in 1948. There were "those in the flock of the Presbyterian mission and that greater number

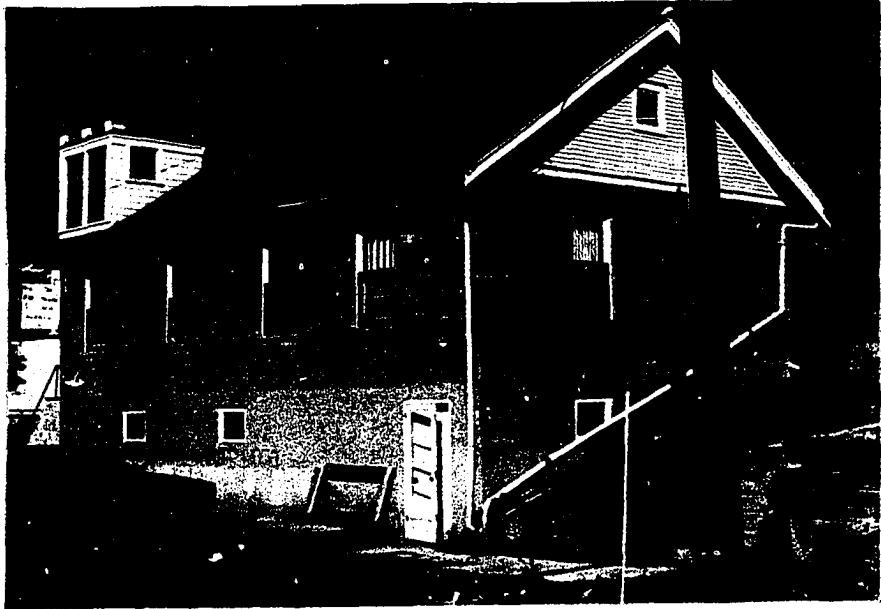


Figure 14. First Presbyterian Mission Church



Figure 15. Mesquakie United Presbyterian Church

which attend services at the Open Bible Mission" (38, p. 46).

The Open Bible Mission began work on the settlement in 1939 and lasted there until the early 1950s. Its teachings were fundamentalist, stressing the rewards of heaven and the punishments of hell where one would go for "smoking, drinking, going to movies, wearing lipstick" (93, p. 309). The headquarters of the Open Bible Mission was the 1891 house built originally for Anna Skea and the Presbyterians, one-half mile to the east of the 1906 Presbyterian mission house. This location was obtained in 1943.

One widely advertised program presented at the Open Bible Mission about 1948 was a "Mechanical Demonstration of Heaven and Hell." This consisted of a three-dimensional contrivance such as one might see at a puppet show. This had been built by a "saved" man, a convert to whom God had sent visions that he would help people. In the "Mechanical" mock-up a narrow road led to Heaven. A much wider one, featuring a prominent saloon, led to Hell. The convert's sermon, using the mock-up as a visual aid, included "threats of going to hell for smoking, drinking, movies, etc., and of a promise of going to Heaven for walking with Jesus." No effort was made to make it comprehensible to an Indian audience (93, p. 803).

The Open Bible Mission played host to groups of 50 and 60 Mesquakie in 1948. Services were held three evenings a week, including Sundays, and Sunday School was held Sunday mornings. The pastor who seemed to feel that "they're a lot like children..." moved out among the Indians as had Reverend Patterson in the thirties. He noted that many of the folklore stories of the Mesquakie had great similarity to stories in the Bible (93, pp. 796-797). The mission ceased to furnish competition for the Presbyterian group sometime in 1954. An affair between a missionary and one of the converts was rumored to be the root of the eventual demise of the Open Bible Mission.

#### Other white church efforts

Many other religious groups, essentially non-Indian, have "sought to win the hearts and minds of the Indians" (5, p. 26). The Nazarenes built a church of white oak logs in Toledo in the 1930s and attracted some Indians to membership including George Youngbear. When this Toledo church closed, he attended the Presbyterian Mission Church. Under the direction of "Elder Cooke, a talkative lad in his twenties" (93, pp. 805-806), the Mormons worked on the settlement and held a somewhat abortive meeting at the Pow Wow grounds in 1948. Despite the appeal of their describing the American Indians as descendents of the lost tribes of



Israel, they gained few converts. Other churches who made evangelizing efforts were the Assembly of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Seventh Day Adventists (5, p. 27).

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, has backed work with the Mesquakie recently. The last few years this has included assistance with getting permanent bleachers up at the Pow Wow grounds and provision of summer recreational personnel at the day school. Introduction of L.S.D. into the settlement by a person connected with the Friends caused a furor several years ago (circa 1970). Currently a Mesquakie man "has been named to the Regional Board of the American Friends Service Committee" (57), although he is not a member of the religious body. The Friends were active through the fifties and sixties "attempting" to support "Mesquakie efforts at Tama to control their schools" (57).

#### Mesquakie Reaction to White Church Efforts

Reactions to the various efforts of Christian churches to convert the Mesquakie range from "Church is all right for white people but not for Indians" (93, p. 1467), to the efforts of an Indian elder with the Presbyterian Mission Church. It was almost inevitable that the Christian churches would be associated with other white men's institutions. In

1937 "The missionary's home, the church, the government farmer's home and barn, and the little school and the teacher's home..." (92, p. 245) formed the "white" elements in the Mesquakie community, all within a half mile of each other, next to the highway and railroad. As Louis Mitchell, Mesquakie pastor at the Presbyterian church put it, "The hardest thing for an Indian to do when he becomes a Christian is to get rid of his prejudice toward white men" (93, p. 1042).

And in a way many of the Mesquakie took of the white religions what they wished and left the rest. "The Christian life--it's a good way to live. I used to drink a lot. Felt terrible the next day. I feel much better now I've stopped" [before joining the church]. And "they say it is wrong to smoke, but I don't think so." Even with a drink or two as well, "I'll still go to Heaven" (93, p. 393). "The Indians have difficulty in making some of the fine distinctions between religions which are made by students of theology" (5, p. 28). "A person may be associated with the Presbyterians and still take part in the Sacred Bundle ceremonies" and thus get benefits from both groups (5, p. 27). The Mesquakie appear to maintain an independent attitude in spiritual concerns, and they remain thus despite all the inducements put forth over the last seventy years.

Indian Religious Efforts with  
the Mesquakie

Indian religious efforts with the Mesquakie, besides the traditional Sacred Bundle religion, include a mysterious innovation called "Medicine Bag" about 1954 (5, p. 27) and talk of a Chippewa Messiah, virgin born, who resided in Wisconsin. This Messiah, who talked at birth, was being raised in the "Indian way" away from white corruption in 1949. But the main Indian religious movements on the settlement are the Society of the Drums and the Native American Church, or Peyote.

As with the Sacred Bundle, or traditional religion of the tribe, "there are some things that shouldn't be told" (93, p. 45), and membership in the organizations is not made available. The two sects are mutually exclusive, unusual on the settlement, but some adherents of either readily adhere to either Christianity or the Bundle religion in addition. Both have definitely white elements prominent in their ritual, possibly to make them more acceptable to Whites, or perhaps to make them less assailable by Whites. Both seem to have begun with tribes which have language ties with the Mesquakie. The Kickapoos, who brought the Peyote button back from their sojourn in Mexico, share the Mesquakie language. And the Pottawatomie spoken by the

Indians who first brought the Drums to the settlement near 1908 is understandable enough so that conversation between a Pottawatomie and a Mesquakie is not difficult.<sup>1</sup>

### The Drum Society

The Drum Society was "claimed to be the Indian way of worshipping God" (5, p. 23).

The peace pipe, the offering of tobacco, the rattle, the eagle feathers, and the sign language are all associated with this ritual, and all are typically Indian. It is a religion of the Indians and by the Indians (5, p. 23).

In addition the number 4, a prominent feature of the Bundle Religion,<sup>2</sup> is very noticeable in rituals of the Drum Society. There are 4 drums, 4 pipes, lit 4 times a day, 4 directions used in dancing, 4 main singers (93, p. 837 and p. 332). "Years ago" the Drum dances lasted 4 days (93, p. 358).

The story of the beginning of the Drum Society stretches the credulity of many.

Before the drums came the Indians knew the day and the hour when they would come. They came from God. The old men knew what to do. They knew the songs they were supposed to sing. The Drum came on a clear beautiful day. It came down out of the sky .... One old man was the main one. He was just like Jesus when he was here. He had a bunch of disciples just like Jesus. They went out to teach the other tribes (93, p. 332).

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<sup>1</sup>Frances Blackcloud, Tama. Personal interview. 1972.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Pushetonequa, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

As one settlement Indian put it, "I learned about the drums a long time ago and when I read the Bible I found out it said the same thing" (93, p. 336).

The missionary Patterson somehow doubted that "devout members of the drums are...seekers after God." Instead he told

that the Mesquakies had told him that the Indians' talk about the Great Spirit was an accommodation to the white man's idea about God, but that the Indians had many gods, especially in nature, such as Thunder, and the Heavenly Bodies (5, p. 24).

Patterson might have been somewhat bitter about the Drum Society since during his stay at the mission in the thirties "a trainload of Indians from the north arrived in full regalia with drums and began proselytizing among the Christian converts" with some success (93, p. 791).

In addition to the elements of the Drum Society that tie in with the traditional Indian religion and Christianity, there is a great display of the American flag, and in one July 4, 1948 meeting, attended by some of the Tax party, a "great American Heritage talk" was a part of matters (93, p. 1516). Appeals to the Great Spirit and general admonishments for good conduct and attention to duty were manifested in good deeds (such as cutting wood for an indisposed tribal member) done by Drum Society members (93, p. 837). But observations by Whites of public ceremonies

of the Drum Society do not really tell them much. For most casual observers the "Drum Society" means the drumming heard on occasion from a location on the highest spot on the settlement where ceremonies are held save in the winter (5, p. 27).

#### The Native American Church (Peyote)

The Peyote cult was introduced on the settlement at about the same time as the Drum Society, around 1908 (38, p. 56). It appears that the cult was organized into the Native American Church in 1918 (5, p. 25). In 1922 the church, formed "for protection against fierce persecution from missionary and governmental circles" had some 13,300 adherents (100, p. 99). The religion has remained on the settlement despite opposition of people like Mr. Thomas of the Open Bible mission who felt that "Peyote...is a poison and comes from Satan" (93, p. 798). The religion seems to have far more direct ties to traditional Christian scripture than do the observances of the Drum Society, and to be celebrated in a much less flamboyant style.

The ceremony is generally performed in a wickiup. In the center is a mound of earth with certain sacred markings upon it. The worshippers are seated around the wall. Songs are sung, prayers are offered, and scripture is read. The ceremony is generally held regularly on Saturday nights and lasts all through the night. During the first half of the night, the old Testament is read. The bringing in of water at midnight represents the coming of Christ. The cere-

mony ends with a ritual breakfast of old Indian foods, "dried corn, gruel, sweetened meat, and cooked cherries" (5, p. 25).

The mescal feast, or the taking of the peyote button, is observed during the evening portion of the ceremony. This portion of the religious observance, which produces visions in some, is sometimes tied to the communion ceremony observed by many Christian churches (5, p. 25). "The peyote 'tepee' is moveable from home to home" (5, p. 27), and thus the Peyote group lacks the central location of the Drum Society and would appear to be more readily unobservable. One of the Chicago Tax group did manage to "wangle an invite" to a peyote meeting but failed efforts to obtain a vision (93, p. 54).

In the summer of 1954 the National Convention of the Native American Church was held at the settlement at Tama. Sol Tax of the Chicago group had been invited, partially "because the church was in trouble and needed the help of sympathetic whites." Mr. Tax felt that a movie of the convention including the entire ceremony would show "that far from being an orgiastic ritual, the ceremony in the tipi is sober and highly sacred in character" (38, p. 305). "Sound truck, crew, and all supplies" were readied through the assistance of the State University of Iowa, and Dr. Tax was set to photograph the Peyote ceremony. After much discussion the president said "if others wished to have the

movie made he had no objections; but he begged to be excused from the ceremony" (38, p. 306). And naturally the portion of the convention of most interest to anthropologists remained unrecorded. This incident points up a problem that arises with all native religions on the settlement. As the ceremonies are kept secret, curiosity is aroused and pursuit of knowledge on the part of scientists somehow becomes a pursuit of esoteric details that, once obtained, prove to mean little enough to one raised outside the tribe.

#### Religious Efforts--A Summation

Concern over the religious assimilation of the Mesquakie has certainly lessened over the last twenty years. Probably the disturbing "moral situation" spoken of by Patterson in 1948 would no longer be attributed to the "lack of religion" among the young (93, p. 792). Religion has become associated less with passionate zeal to save souls and more with the pragmatic aspects of existence. The army does not accept "Indian custom" marriage, for instance, and so some Mesquakie in the military services must go through another type of ceremony if they are to collect service benefits.<sup>1</sup> Also many see the variety of religious efforts

<sup>1</sup>Laverne Seth, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.



as another highly divisive factor in the small community.<sup>1</sup>

White missionaries often have felt that the odds against them in the competition for religious allegiance were unduly one-sided. The Drum Society and Peyote not only had the advantage of using ritual objects familiar to the Indians such as "drums, the rattles, eagle feathers, tobacco, and wickiup," but they furnished opportunity for leadership and recognition to those same Indians whom the Christian church personnel would have preferred working in their behalf. In some cases the two groups took away from the membership of the missions themselves (5, pp. 25-26).

Conservative tribal members, on the other hand, see the competition in a far different light. The monetary backing of Christian groups is obviously far greater than that of those who would promote the tribal religion or Sacred Pack. Peyote and the Drum Society are seen as "accommodating" religions that smack of white elements. At no time has any religion other than that of the Sacred Packs had a majority of the tribe as adherents, and the current situation in which the traditional religion holds a position of roughly five to one over its nearest competitor (Peyote) appears to have been fairly constant over the last fifty years.

One of the things particularly irksome to the tradi-

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

tional tribal members is the feeling that divisiveness on religious matters is a bad thing for the tribe, set up traditionally as a social group following a complete and unique way of life, largely free from faction and interior squabble. As one conservative and college educated Mesquakie put it, "I'd be for any of the groups [Sacred Pack, Peyote, Drum Society, Presbyterian Mission] if they would all go for that."<sup>1</sup> The diversity of religious training has long been a source of confusion to Mesquakie youth. One Mesquakie, raised in the traditional religion, went to boarding school in the early twenties with no English. "I learned a lot of things. I learned about the Bible and so on.... I didn't know where to turn" (93, p. 549). Currently many would like Mesquakie used at the settlement school for a portion of the instruction. The language is a necessary part of the traditional religion. Also there is concern over confusion in the minds of young Mesquakie, not yet old enough to make the teachings of proponents of the Sacred Packs and those of various forms of Christianity and later Indian religions as compatible as they appear to many of their elders.

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

## SOCIAL EDUCATION AND THE MESQUAKIE

Mesquakie youth are reared in an environment to which only a minority of the surrounding Whites are able to relate or understand. Perhaps the social relationships of Mesquakie youth and their seeming differences from those of White youth in the Tama area would best be left to a sociologist, but to ignore the effects of poverty, alcoholism, and what the writer has chosen to call "fear" in educational situations is to present an incomplete view. A rather brief perusal of these areas appears appropriate.

## Poverty

Few Mesquakies ever reached any degree of affluence, and those who did move into the brackets of the middle class usually left the settlement to attain such economic status. Throughout the Twentieth Century poverty has continued a constant condition on the settlement, alleviated now and then, but only for brief periods.

In 1920 trapping still brought some income to the settlement, the agent's report showing that fifty men received \$3,000 (\$60 each) for pelts (3, [1920 Statistical Report of agent Breid]). However, by 1923 the agent wrote that

Many of the Indians in past years have spent about two months in the fall and spring in trapping but practically the whole state of Iowa is closed to

them at the present time. The number of fur bearing animals has been reduced so that the white people will not permit them to trap (3, Breid, 1923).

And thus what had been a significant element of Mesquakie income was largely cut off at that time.

In the late twenties a trade with tourists on the newly paved Highway 30 was developing. In 1927 some \$2,600 was received by settlement residents from basket-making (\$600), beadwork (\$1,500), and jewelry (\$500) (3, Breid, 1929).

Agents became enthusiastic over what seemed a significant contribution to the welfare of the settlement. Ash trees were planted for baskets, and attempts were made to get pottery manufacture established on the settlement (3, Breid and Nelson, 1929-1935). Unfortunately for several years in the thirties there was so little money in the country that sales of goods to tourists became almost insignificant.

The point to be made on the poverty of the Mesquakie is that it is constant. Income from off-settlement labor on farms ceased with the depression; later, with the coming of large farm machinery after World War II, demand for farm labor was again on the wane. In 1928 five Mesquakie were most successful in driving tractors for a road grading contractor working on and near the settlement. When the road was completed either they would have had to leave the settlement or lose the income [at that time about three

dollars a day] (3, Bried, 1928). The combination of inadequate education and few marketable skills made it difficult for most Mesquakie to maintain steady employment. Dependence on temporary employment has created for the tribal members constant difficulties which government programs (beginning in the thirties) have failed to eliminate. Painters from the boarding schools had steady employment often through the summer months. The presence of the sanatorium at Toledo furnished some jobs for Indians, largely the lowest paying ones, until its closing in 1942. Glimpses and hopes for a more sound economic basis for settlement life appear, such as Tamacraft or a treaty settlement from the federal government, but the constant companion of the Mesquakie nation for well over a century has been poverty. In 1936 some 327 out of 408 settlement residents were "receiving direct relief" through the Bureau of Interior (3, Nelson, 1937). And despite fluctuations in economic fortune and current service from such agencies as the Public Health Service, the life led by most Mesquakie would be considered by most Whites as crowded and poor.

## Alcoholism

Many Indians, frustrated by life in a society which rewards only white values, turn to drink. The great divergence in cultural emphases, "massive paternalism, language barriers, [and] problems in semantics" results in a situation that is so complex and "irresoluable" that it results in "one of the greatest social challenges of our time" (82, p. 2). Drinking by a portion of the settlement residents has been a continuous problem mentioned in nearly every agent's annual report. It continues almost unabated into the 1970s. In an examination of 120 arrests for intoxication in Tama County, conducted during a 1967 time period, 68 per cent involved Indians. Indians make up 2 per cent of the county's population (82, pp. 4-5). While the preceding statistic is tempered somewhat with the information that the report included "repeaters" and that the frequenting of taverns rather than country clubs by Indians may well increase their chances of arrest, it is obvious that the Mesquakie settlement at Tama has a continuous problem in the form of resident alcoholics.

For the last five years a "Comprehensive Treatment Program for Indian Problem Drinkers" has been carried on through government funds and the cooperation of local and federal government agencies. Activities have included

counseling both by Indian specialists (thus removing the language barrier), and by professional social workers, cooperation with local arresting officers and local courts, antabuse treatment, and a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. Psychiatric treatment has been provided for some. A counseling and detoxification center has been maintained (used by some Whites as well as Indians) in downtown Tama, Iowa (82). The drinking problem continues, and while there is disagreement over the efficacy of the treatment center<sup>1</sup>, it is obvious to all concerned that the problem of alcoholism among a significant group of settlement residents (sometimes referred to as "the drinking group") continues. Techniques of removing barriers to treatment-- such as language, availability, and avoidance of the "appointment" style scorned by many Indians -- have had a limited success at best.

Indian problem drinking at the settlement, like Indian problem drinking in other areas of the country, seems to involve a pattern different from that of many white alcoholics. Rarely does the Indian drinker find himself condemned by his fellows for drinking. It is seen as a personal problem. Rarely does the Indian alcoholic drink by himself. He is more often the binge type of drinker, given to joining in readily on an urge of "let's celebrate," illus-

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

trating "... a behavioral pattern of use in which drinking is periodic, explosive, and centered around peer group interaction" (82, pp. i-ii). Often the Indian alcoholic is urged to drink by his drinking fellows. Indian specialists who worked at the Tama Rehabilitation Center and who were recovered alcoholics found that being urged to drink by the "drinking group" was one of their greatest problems (82, pp. 24-28).

While "the major problems, that of child neglect and drinking involve only about ten or fifteen people" in the sixties, at this time boys of twelve and thirteen were found intoxicated and "It is suspected that Indian youth are able to purchase alcoholic beverages" from local bootleggers (30, 1960-1962). One settlement resident recalled intoxication at the age of nine from "home brew."<sup>1</sup> Drinking is familiar to the settlement youth from their earliest years. Some Indians brought their children with them to Tama taverns. In the sixties some Indian students were skipping high school and going to taverns, and "the taverns, especially on Saturday nights resemble a teenage canteen..." (30, 1960-1962).

It has long been noted that country-wide, the Indian has been exposed to the least civilized and admirable customs of the Whites, including their drinking habits. In dis-

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<sup>1</sup>An interview with a Tama resident. 1972.



cussing this situation with the writer (in 1973), a settlement resident commented, "Hell, nothing's changed." And he noted that the warmest welcome received by Mesquakie in the Tama community for the most part was at the taverns.

#### Uneasiness and Fear

Over the years, law and order on the Sac and Fox settlement has been a portion of the gray area on the legal status of the Mesquakie. On the settlement itself the Mesquakie are subject to federal law on specified crimes such as murder. Other than these crimes, provision must be made for an Indian court, or some means other than the channels of legal action applicable to most citizens (or to the Mesquakie themselves off the settlement) if judicial recourse is to be had. The Tama settlement was and is relatively small in physical size and population, and in 1920 agent Breid reported "no court of Indian offenses" although he believed that one "would serve a very useful purpose." He felt that if such a court were present "Indians committing minor offenses" could be brought to justice and that "discipline on the reservation could be very much improved" (3, Breid, 1920). The situation in which there were "a large number of crimes and offenses committed by Indians on the Reservation [settlement], that go unpunished" (3, Breid, 1927) continued to plague Breid and later agents for fifty years, as

they had previous agents. On settlement, local laws did not apply and state laws did not cover some offenses. On larger reservations such measures as Indian courts took care of this legal gap, but the settlement remains in an undefined state as of 1973. One late try at an Indian court in the 1940s was a failure (see above).

While much of the legal concern was over "Indian Custom" marriages and gambling of a necessarily minor nature, there was also concern over larceny and school truancy. It took four years to get one boy's grandfather to send him to school, the case finally being settled in a Cedar Rapids Federal Court (3, Breid, 1922-1929). Agents withheld annuities (for brief periods) over the years 1909 to 1925 to force school attendance, and they also succeeded in bringing about a number of legal marriages as well. But complaints to higher Bureau officials ended the practice, even though the local agent argued that the procedure had been done in the best interest of all (3, Breid, 1920-1928).

One effect of the lack of a consistent, firm law enforcement on the settlement has been a lack of legal recourse on the part of residents when they are abused. Returning students from boarding schools could get no land if they wished to farm, unless land in use by families was offered them, and this did not occur. There was no practical legal way to get land from those using it, even though, the

land was held in common. The more tenacious residents tended to end up with disproportionate shares of land. Recourse in case of larceny or child molestation on the settlement would have to take place through federal court (3, 1900-1930). Difficulties among the Mesquakie tend to be settled within the tribe, perhaps remarkably well under the circumstances.

Most information on bitterness and minor crime found by investigators on the settlement comes from Whites. Residents do not readily discuss such matters. But fear and uneasiness from minor crimes is not the only concern. Comments such as "those people literally get away with murder" are also heard on occasion. This is in reference to several suspicious cases of suicide, accidental deaths, and at least one mysterious disappearance (93, p. 674, among many). The lack of law enforcement and control has contributed not only to intratribal difficulties and factional splits, but the ensuing feelings of frustration and ill will tend to be transferred to the "Whites" in general and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in particular.

The presence among settlement residents of disproportionate amounts of poverty, alcoholism and fear (or lack of security) helps to create a situation difficult for most Whites to understand. Resentment against Whites in general grows as a result of these elements, and education by white teachers and in white schools remains difficult

after a century of effort. Perhaps the following says it better.

#### COUNTRY SLUM

Wintersnows slowly falling--as I  
breathe on the curtainless window.  
I can hear my Mom call  
through the card-board walls  
for someone to take down  
the frozen clothes from the branches  
"Put them on the stove to dry," she says.  
There's no firewood. Not even outside  
except trees too big for burning.  
I have to get up and dress--7:30.  
Bus comes through country roads  
full of farmers. Must hurry.

In the bus--white farm kids (oppression)  
smile milk, bacon and eggs.  
I sit breathing cornmeal, bread, and tea.  
The bus nice and warmer than the house.  
The clean clothes they wear.  
And I sit secretly removing lint  
from my blue jeans.  
Wore them yesterday, my pajamas too.  
So who's going to notice?

--Ray Youngbear '73 (104)

## POINT OF VIEW

In some ways learning the rudiments of the history of Mesquakie education changes things very little. Prior to obtaining knowledge of the situation, one is apt to come up with generalizations such as "We [Whites] have exploited this people for centuries, and we really need to do something." or "What is needed is to cut off all assistance--let them sink or swim." After a thorough perusal and the beginning of an understanding, the shelter of the generalizations disappears, and there is the temptation to simply throw one's hands in despair. There is no obvious place to begin--no practical move which will solve major problems or begin a series of events which will bring about a more satisfactory situation. In the case of the Amish the state legislature has allowed them to keep their schools and thus more of their way of life, at least for a time. The situation with the Mesquakie is not that simple.

Traditional Mesquakie education features a way of life of which an integral and perhaps the most important part is the native religion. The Mesquakie native religion requires the knowledge and use of the Mesquakie language. This presents a case for state officials far different from that of a religious group who have in the main accepted the first eight grades as generally taught in the public schools. If

the Mesquakie language is used in the settlement school, who is to know what is being taught? For the most part only a major portion of the tribal members would be able to tell. The person whom the state made responsible for the inspection of the school would have to take a good deal on faith.

If the religious and language problem at the settlement school were to be resolved as far as the state of Iowa was concerned, another problem might well arise. Not all Mesquakie wish to have their children in a kind of school which would be based in part on traditional values. Currently a substantial number of the tribe choose to send their children to the public schools for the first four grades. They feel that their chances of success will be enhanced if they go into an integrated situation from the beginning. The tribe already has many members living off-reservation, and further reductions in numbers at the school would not help. Concern for the small enrollment at the school was expressed during the 1972-1973 school year.<sup>1</sup> Also, contention over who is a true Mesquakie and who is an interloper does not end with arguments among adult residents, but it extends to the grounds of the settlement school. Action to use the native language in the school would tend to deepen this rift.

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

The differences between the Mesquakie culture and that of their white neighbors has lessened. Travel through the settlement will reveal many tv antennae; many settlement Mesquakie commute to secure positions in outlying industries; and one would be hard put to parallel the situation ensuing some three decades ago in which a local wartime industry, employing some one-hundred Mesquakie, maintained three washrooms--one for Blacks, one for Indians, and one for Whites (93, pp. 655-656). But the disappearance of outward signs of prejudice including the ban on selling hard liquor to Indians in state liquor stores (within the last ten years) has not meant that White and Mesquakie can sit down and discuss matters as easily as a White with another White or an Indian with another Indian.

Few Mesquakie mix on a social basis with Whites. Few South Tama white students have Indian students for friends. Pressure from both "races" inhibits this.<sup>1</sup> This appears to be nobody's fault in particular. The economic status of most Mesquakies precludes their social mixture with most influential Whites, just as a similar lack of affluence does for much of the white population. The discomfort felt by both Whites and Indians in many situations they share is similar to that felt by Whites and Blacks in their

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with a South Tama teacher. 1973.

social interminglings. On the part of the minority group paternalism in any form is resented and a full and equal relationship is desired. But with the Mesquakie, as with other minority units, this easy and natural relationship of grace and mutual respect remains an ideal--a concept only. In practice the Mesquakie tend to resent and suspect all Whites. Whites tend either to suspect all Indians or at least to be quite confused and uncomfortable. This emotional and suspicious atmosphere is hardly conducive to improving one of the knottiest educational situations to be found in the state.

Prospects for settlement residents to reach some kind of workable consensus regarding their educational needs and desires lessens with each new group which becomes interested in the tribe. Recently the American Indian Movement has shown active concern in Mesquakie affairs. Some tribal members belong to A.I.M. while others view it with suspicion. The Indians on the settlement who hold positions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs naturally prefer not to have B.I.A. personnel unhappy. Christian church groups have never really reconciled themselves with the native religion of the tribe. The reverberation from the visits of the University of Chicago student group which began over twenty years ago are still present. Regardless of intention



on the part of religious, political, scholastic and philanthropic groups, for the most part they contribute more to dissension on the settlement than they do to unity. In an area of only a few square miles, occupied by a people interlaced with what are surely the most concentrated family ties in the state, practically all matters affecting tribal members are known throughout the settlement. Any change encouraged or implemented by an outside group affects the settlement, with envy if nothing else.

One noticeable problem on the settlement is the lack of continuous leadership among the Mesquakie themselves. It takes an individual of rare qualities to play the role of a Mesquakie leader. Practically no overt pressure is used. Numbers alone limit the supply of possible leaders, and then when one becomes influential there is no guarantee that he will remain on the settlement. The man who can manage to influence tribal affairs successfully is apt to be one who will have opportunities to move from the settlement and to find employment which would take him from the immediate area. It is one thing to remain on the tribal roll and another to participate in tribal council and settlement government. Many council members are older Mesquakie who have been gone from the area for long periods of time and then have returned. The Mesquakie lack the tradition of leaders in a white sense and at the same time there is lack

of opportunity for leaders to develop.

Perhaps the greatest discouragement in the study of Mesquakie education comes as one notes the tenacity of the problems that beset the tribe. Over a century has passed since the return to Iowa and the beginnings of educational efforts with the tribe. Neither religious efforts, boarding school efforts, settlement day school efforts, or public school efforts have been really successful. Law and order, drinking, poverty, legal jurisdiction and tribal government continue as major problems, though they have changed form somewhat. Control of the tribe has swung from conservatives to progressives and finally in the last two decades there has developed something of a standoff between the "factions" until even the Pow Wow had been threatened.<sup>1</sup> Despite significant changes in B.I.A. policy in recent years (103), including many more Indians in executive positions, actions by the government are treated with reserve and suspicion. The best laid plans of the tribe, government personnel, missionaries and, lastly, the scholars from the University of Chicago have not resulted in much save an unsatisfactory situation. Ignorance remains with all parties to the educational efforts and few are happy and contented or see good prospects for the future.

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

At this point the question may well be asked, "Are there no indications of good prospects for the Mesquakie?" There are, but they rest on the shaky premise that men of good will can accomplish much of what they set their minds to.

For many Whites, including the writer, it is a genuine pleasure to know some of the Mesquakie. The longer the exposure continues the greater the attraction becomes. One is remembered. One is known. Attempts to gather information through interviews efficiently and quickly give way to the gradual acquisition of information through conversation and gracious acceptance of unspoken clues that tell one when the "interview" is over. One's quiet acceptance of "death newt" for "deaf mute" is more than reciprocated by the lack of hilarity when one attempts to say "Black Hawk" in Mesquakie. There is a lack of social pretension that is a real pleasure. A popular substitute teacher at the settlement school some eight years ago was presented some beadwork as a gift when she departed one spring. The donor commented, "We could have sold this for five dollars, but we decided to give it to you."<sup>1</sup>

The long record of exploitation of Indian tribes by unscrupulous Whites is mirrored in the experiences of the Mesquakie, but a remarkable number of people from many walks of life have made honest attempts to help the tribe

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Roberson, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

in some way. The fact that the results were usually disappointing should not obscure the sincere altruism of B.I.A. officials, visiting scholars, missionaries, legislators, and leaders of nationwide Indian movements. The well-meaning of many of the persons who have dealt with the Mesquakie is not in any serious doubt. Fred Gearing, certainly no great backer of B.I.A. handling of Mesquakie affairs, mentions the "Federal servants" who were "doing their impossible job well, by and large..." (39, p. 20). Never have so many meant so well for so long and come up with such unsatisfying results. Agreement on ways to assist the tribe has never centered on a single path, either among Indians or among confused Whites, but great sympathy is there. Perhaps the would-be helpers of the Mesquakie see "through them the man, the universally human, oneself." Perhaps each sees "the face of the Fox" as his own (39, p. 128). It may be small comfort to the Mesquakie, but serious efforts to assist them by sympathetic outsiders have been constant over the last century and continue today.

The one factor that is the most hopeful sign of a good future for the Mesquakie tribe is dreadfully obvious. The tribe exists. As Indian nations go the Mesquakie are very small, less than a thousand at present. The settlement is also small, under 4,000 acres of land, much of it marginal.

The economic basis for the tribal members rests on off-settlement employment, government services, and occasional treaty settlements, and there are no wealthy Mesquakie. Yet the tribe, The People, remain. Despite the disappearance of the settlement store, despite the constant departure of tribal members from the settlement, despite the constant attention from paternalistic government officials, zealous missionaries, and clumsy scholars, yes, despite a solid century of ignorance and misunderstanding, the tribe, The People, the Mesquakie remain. The native religion is "our religion." The now-closed Indian hospital built in the thirties is "our hospital," and (from a highly-accultured "progressive" Mesquakie man) "It is a terrible thing for a man to forget his mother tongue." Everything considered, the viable existence of this body of people as a distinct tribe is the most hopeful sign for their future.

## A SUMMATION

Some definite remnants of government Indian education remain with the Mesquakie today. The day school on the settlement still operates through the fourth grade, even though the teachers for it are hired by the South Tama School Administration. An estimated average of seven Mesquakie attend boarding schools somewhere in the country each year,<sup>1</sup> although these are much changed from the times in the late twenties when an average of over forty Mesquakie attended schools such as Pipestone and Genoa each year. Haskell Indian Community College, the latest development in federal government Indian education, has had a few Mesquakie among their students. While it is much reduced, government schools still play a significant role in Mesquakie education.

Mesquakie students have attended public schools in large numbers since World War II. They are not a part of the South Tama School district, however. Their legal status proved a difficulty when reorganization efforts were begun in the early sixties. Success in the public schools varies markedly; but, overall, Mesquakie students have had some good experiences there. These have included athletics, particularly in the forties and fifties. Currently, large

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<sup>1</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

numbers of Mesquakie take art at the High School with impressive results. In the public schools there is a definite tendency for Indian students to stick with other Indian students (2, pp. 56-57), and in 1973 two large murals were painted on the wall of the cafeteria, one by Indian students and the other by white students.



Figure 16. Mural by Indian students at South Tama High School

The writer has had a number of South Tama graduates as community college students over the last five years. Questioning of these students reveals that only in a rare instance (one) does a South Tama white student count an Indian among his close friends and acquaintances. Attendance and dropout rates among Indian students remain a concern for school personnel, although the recent records for the Mesquakie are more consistent than those of Indian populations in other areas.<sup>1</sup>

The ambition of the Chicago University students of getting professional Mesquakie into the local community in order to enhance Indian status with local Whites is far from realized. Some few Mesquakie have attended college, but those who are successful rarely return to the settlement. One is currently a counselor at an Arizona government Indian school. There is no longer any difficulty in obtaining funds for higher education for Indian students. Private funds (such as the Cowles foundation) and Indian Bureau special funds<sup>2</sup> are available for this purpose. Also there is the community college (Haskell) at Lawrence, Kansas, where an Indian student can begin a career regardless of where he happens to be in language skills. In the late thirties a

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry Nichols, Tama. Personal interview. 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Newman Groves, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.



Mesquakie wished to be a lawyer and attended Drake University at Des Moines. Latin proved an insurmountable barrier and English extremely difficult (93, p. 459). In recent years, however, both monetary and academic blocks have largely been eliminated for the Mesquakie in higher education. The response to this condition has been steady but minor. One college-educated Mesquakie (1973) is currently on the settlement with ambition to improve conditions for "The People." He is the first.

The Mesquakie on the settlement at Tama remain far poorer than the majority of their white neighbors. Many of them have great difficulty in efforts to readily understand English. Bitterness among themselves and toward Whites continues and helps no one. But the Mesquakie are learning. Settlements with the federal government have given impetus to such changes as more low-cost housing in the form of trailer houses and modest dwellings, and a good deep-well water supply is almost a reality. This last summer "About 51 Mesquakie Indian youths from 14 to 21" worked at clean-up and community work on the settlement. Their wages were paid from funds supplied by the O.E.O. [Office of Economic Opportunity] Youth Corps, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Employment Assistance Funds. Current press coverage is broad and sympathetic and may provide considerable understanding among Whites (85). Such recent innovations in

Indian education as the bilingual approach operative in some Navajo communities are being investigated by some Mesquakie.<sup>1</sup> While "For a White to be admitted into the inner circle of confidence about Indian religion is [still] a rare thing," yet Indian religions receive far more objective treatment among Whites than in the past (63).

There are prospects for a more fulfilling life for the Mesquakie as they begin to control more of their own affairs and as Whites begin to learn from them and to understand them more. The results for the entire community, including Whites, Indians, and curious academicians in search of degrees can be most gratifying. The results thus far have proved so for the writer. It is hoped that this study will contribute to similar gains for others.

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<sup>1</sup>Don Wanatee, Tama. Personal interview. 1973.

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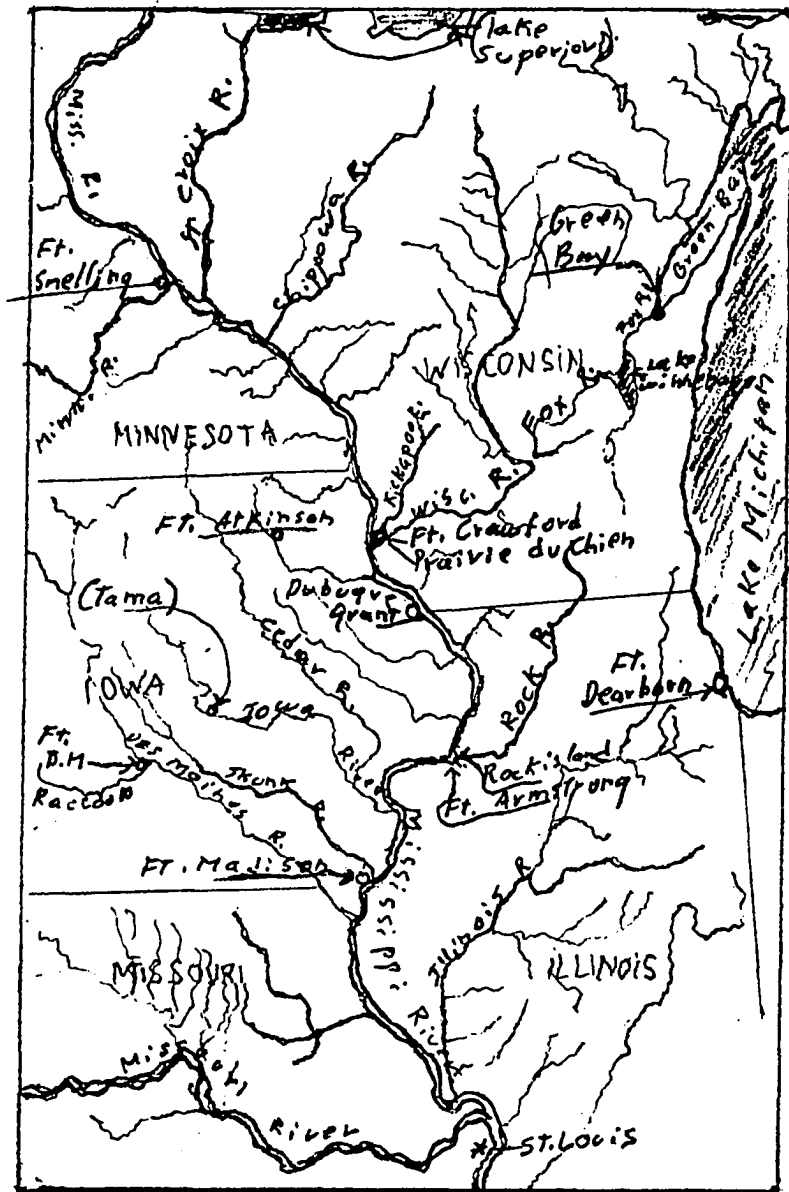
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## APPENDIX

It has been impossible to establish precise figures for the number of Mesquakie in boarding schools. Also the time spent in these schools by tribal members varies from perhaps a week or a month to twelve years or even more. The writer adapted a formula, using four years as a working average of the time that the average student would spend in boarding school. Not all figures are available, but from the agent's report and (for 1969-73) information supplied by the local B.I.A. office, the following years are established.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total in all government boarding schools (not including the sanatorium school)</u>	
1920	27	
1921	[no figure]	From indications and occasional
1922	24	figures in other reports the follow-
1923	29	ing averages were assumed:
1924	24	
1925	28	1896-1912 16 yrs. at 5 80
		1913-1919 7 yrs. at 20 140
1926	27	1921 1 25 25
1927	45	1932-1933 2 40 80
1928	44	1935-1968 33 10 330
1929	41	estimated 655
1930	[no figure]	confirmed 403
1931	54	1058
1932	[no figure]	
1933	[no figure]	
1934	18	1058 ÷ 4 = 265
1969	6	
1970	6	[the 1969 through 1973 figures reflect
1971	13	those who <u>finished</u> the school year]
1972	9	
1973	8	
	<u>403 established</u>	

The writer's estimate of a figure of 250 for individual Mesquakie who have attended boarding schools for one year or more would seem conservative enough. In any event the use of the term "hundreds" appears justified.



Map taken from page 253 of Vol. I. William J. Peterson. Story of Iowa. Lewis Historical Publishing Co., New York, 1952.

Figure 17. Portion of the Upper Mississippi River Valley occupied (in part) by the Sac and Fox for two-hundred years

