

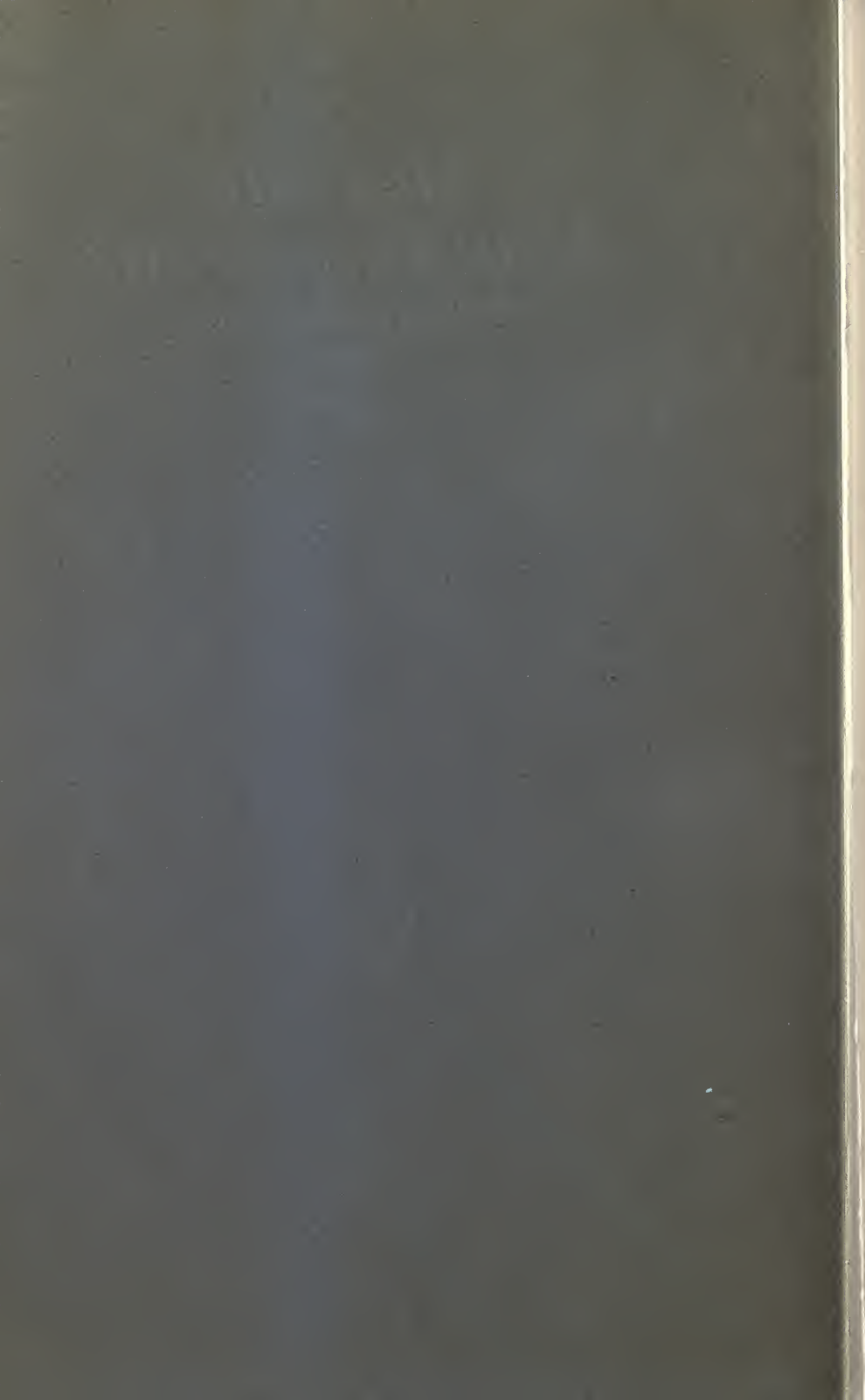
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Indian Encampment

Chicago Centennial

1903





Indian Encampment

At Lincoln Park, Chicago

Sept. 26 to Oct. 1

1903



In Honor of the
City's Centennial Anniversary

By
Edward B. Clark

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Indian Encampment

IF you would know the Chicago of a century ago, look about you. The dead past lives anew in this Indian village. Forget the great, throbbing city which lies just beyond, and here, amid these wigwams peopled by a strange race, find the picture of conditions existing before the white man and his civilization came to this Lake Michigan shore.

These men, these women and children, these huts and these implements of war and the chase, are the same to-day as on that yesterday of a century ago. These Indians, the Pottawattomies, the Winnebagos and their brothers of the other tribes, are here camped, probably for the last time, on the ground once held by their fathers by inherent right.

There are those among the chiefs present who still hold to the belief that this land is theirs and that those who have dispossessed them did it by means of that might which makes right. Strange as it may appear to the white possessors of the soil, strong in their hundred years' holding, there are those among the temporary sojourners in this village who still have hope that recompense may be made them some day for this land which they yielded up when the ruling race came.

There are gathered here in the village which makes such a striking feature of the celebration of Chicago's birthday, the representatives of six great tribes of red men who once lived either upon this very spot or its immediate vicinity. Just where these Indians are met to-day there dwelt a century ago, the tribe of Pottawattomies under their chiefs Pokagon and Poteneebec. Near them, and at times disputing the Pottawattomies' right to the shore at the river's mouth, lived the Winnebagos, the Ottawas, the Menominees, the Chippewas and the Sacs and Foxes.

Representatives of all these tribes, the descendants of the warriors and hunters of the first Pokagon's time, are gathered here to-day to do honor to the birthday of the city whose rise meant their scattering to different and distant hunting grounds.

The Pottawattomie Indians assembled number forty in all, braves, squaws and papposes. Charles Pokagon, grandson of the chief who saw the first white man set foot on this shore, is here in command of the remnant of his once great tribe.

From Wisconsin and Nebraska have come from their reservations the Winnebagos who one hundred years ago traded and fought with the Pottawattomies on the site of Chicago. Chief Noginkah, Striking Tree, is in command of the forty followers who came with him to take part in Chicago's birthday festivities.

From Northern Michigan has come a score of the Ottawas nearly all that is left of a once numerous people. Chief Blackbird is in charge. Ask Chief Blackbird his age and he will answer "Nin ki-tis nin-do-twak." (I am one hundred years old.)

Chief Blackbird is celebrating with Chicago his centennial anniversary.

Chief Pushnateka led the twenty-five representatives of the Sacs and Fox nation from their reservations in Iowa and the Indian territory to this Lincoln Park village. Pushnateka is the war chief of his tribe, while with him is Sawahghasah, the civil chief, the leader who attends to all of his people's affairs with the government of the United States.

From Northern Wisconsin have come twenty representatives of the Menominees, under the guidance of Chief Lone Star.

The Chippewas, who are to-day perhaps more numerous than any of the tribes represented, are gathered in this village to the number of fifty men, women and children. Their leaders are Chiefs Wawahbasha and Chicag, the latter a namesake of the city, though perhaps it were better to put it the other way, for the city bears the name, with a slight addition, of one of Chicag's ancestor chiefs.

All the Indians encamped in the village came to the city at the personal solicitation of Mr. T. R. Roddy of Chicago. Mr. Roddy, whose father was a trader among the Winnebagos of Wisconsin, was brought up with the boys of that tribe of Indians as his playmates. He learned their language and learned to sympathize with them in their ways. When he grew to manhood



CHIEF SIMON POKAGON.

he became their counselor when they stood in need of counsel, and at the death of Black Hawk, the nephew of the chief by whose name we know one great Indian war, he was elected their chief, being given the name of White Buffalo, a name that to the Indians represents the highest form of compliment.

The Indian village is a replica of the villages which existed along the Michigan shore one hundred years ago. There are present about two hundred braves, squaws and children. A majority of them live to-day, when on their reservations, in just such tepees, huts and wigwams as are here shown. The few who have built houses after the manner of the white man, have tepees within the shadow of the roof, and in them live most of their time. The white man's house may represent progress, but to the Indian it does not represent comfort. He wishes to live as did his ancestors in the years before Chicago was born.

The huts of bark and rushes are those of the Chippewas. The Winnebagos have wigwams of skin, the Pottawattomies and the Ottawas are in tepees, while the Sacs and Foxes are in rush houses.

The Indians are in the costumes worn by their ancestors, and as a matter of fact, though most of them live within sight of civilization, they appear at all times in clothing of the kind which they are here seen wearing. Some of these wilderness dwellers are Christians, but the greater part of those assembled are true to the religion of their forbears and still perform the mystic rites and ceremonies which marked the worship of the Great Spirit as he was conceived by the Indian mind.

Daily during the continuance of the encampment the Indians will engage in all the sports and games in which they indulge on the reservations during the hours of relaxation from toil and hunting. There will be canoe and dugout races, foot races and swimming races, canoe tilting, mock marriage ceremonies, the weird scalp and buffalo dances and contests in bow and arrow shooting, in which the Indian is an expert from his early boyhood.

One of the spectacular features of the encampment will be the attack on the block house, which is a reproduction of one of the defenses of the original Fort Dearborn, planned and built by Captain Whistler just one hundred years ago.

Special mention should be made of the la crosse game which will be played on the baseball ground at Lincoln Park. This game is a favorite with the Indians, and, for that matter, with many



RUSH WIGWAM OF WINNEBAGOS.

whites, though it is essentially a red man's game. It is interesting and exciting in the extreme, being full of dash and go from the start.

The life of the Indians in the village will be that of their ancestors and that of the majority of those present when they are at home in the northern woods or on the western prairies. They will cook by means of camp fires at the doors of their wigwams, and the women will ply their art of moccasin making, matting weaving and bead work, while the men will make birch bark canoes and tan the skins of animals.

Touching again the matter of sports, it may be said that there have been gathered together in this village the Indians known to be the best canoe men in the whole country. Their races will be genuine contests. One branch of the Chippewa is partial to dugouts, and these boats will be shown in several varieties and will be used in the racing.

Canoe tilting is a favorite water sport of the Indians. They stand in their canoes and each contestant tries by means of his pole to throw his opponent into the water. It is exciting but good humored play.

When the attack upon the block house takes place, the scene enacted will have all the semblance of a real battle, and, while the last fight between the Indians and the whites on the ground upon which Chicago stands took place generations ago, it is of interest to note that there will be present watching the demonstration of the players, a man who remembers distinctly the great fight under the cottonwood tree on the lake shore, in the year 1812, where many soldiers of the garrison of Fort Dearborn laid down their lives under the rain of bullets and arrows of the Pottawattomies. O-gi-maw Mac-ke-te-pe-nas-sy, Chief Blackbird, was a boy nine years old at the time that Poteneabee and the other chiefs attacked Captain Heald and his men within an hour after their evacuation of the old fort. The chief remembers the receipt of the news by the members of his tribe of this victory of the Indian over the white man and the ardent hope that it excited in the breasts of the braves that the day was not yet past when it might be possible for the aboriginal owners of the soil to check the encroachments of the alien invaders.

Every Indian present in the village has heard from his father and his grandfather the recital of the tale of that fight of the long



CHIEF BLACKBIRD.

ago. White men always speak of the battle under the cottonwood as a "massacre," and the fight has gone into history as "The Fort Dearborn Massacre." Simon Pokagon, son of a chief present at the fight, always resented the name given to the battle. He had heard the story time after time from the lips of his father, and he has told it time after time to his son Charles Pokagon, the present chief of the Pottawattomies. Simon Pokagon died about four years ago. He had struggled for years to secure from the United States government the fulfillment of the promises made to his tribe at the time of the early treaties, and in part he succeeded. He left the completion of his work to his son Charles, who is now in the village.

In the year 1897, Simon Pokagon made an arrangement with the late Edward G. Mason, President of the Chicago Historical Society, to come to the city to tell the people, at a great public gathering, the Indian's side of the Fort Dearborn fight. The holding of the meeting was postponed for some time and in the interim Mr. Mason died and the proposed gathering was not held. Pokagon outlined the speech he had intended to make, and as he gave the details, with one hand half clinched and his eye bright with kindled indignation, there was no doubting the sincerity of his belief in that which he uttered. This is his story:

"A sacred treaty was entered into between the soldiers at Fort Dearborn and the Pottawattomie people. The soldiers agreed to do some things in the way of giving goods to the Indians in exchange for services. The details of the treaty I do not know, but it was the breaking of this agreement that angered the Indians. They had been lied to from the first time they saw the white man.

"The head soldier in the fort agreed only the day before he marched out that some of the things which he must leave behind were to be given to the braves. This was not done. They did get liquor though—not all of it, but too much. Was it the Pottawattomies' fault that liquor had been brought out from the far east to their home in the wilderness? Was it the Indian's fault that the fire in the liquor made him mad? Does it not do the same for the white man? The whites had stolen lands and had broken promises; was there not cause enough for a fight?

"A 'massacre' they say it was. 'The Indians were treacherous.' The fight went on just as the white men fight one another to-day in the war time. You would speak of the killing of the



CHIEF PUSHNATEKA, OF THE SACS AND FOX, AND TWO CHILDREN.

women and children. Do you know that one white man was shot that day as he was directing his horse where the Indian's children were hiding, that he might kill them? No one seems to know this, yet you will find it in the book where the story is told by the trader's daughter who was there that day. What Pokagon says is true."

Fort Dearborn was built at the mouth of the Chicago river as a result of the treaty, made eight years before its construction, by "Mad Anthony" Wayne with fifteen tribes. This was immediately after the battle of Fallen Timbers, where Wayne fought, among other Indians, the Pottawattomies from the vicinity of Chicago. Because of his impetuosity at that fight the mad general was given the name of Tornado by the Pottawattomies.

The Indians ceded only a small part of the present site of Chicago in that treaty. The rest of the land was taken afterward. The story has it that Simon Pokagon's father ceded the site of the city to the government at the price of three cents an acre. The son, Pokagon, always insisted that only a part of the territory embraced in the present city was included in the sale and that his tribe is the rightful owner of a large part of the most valuable land in the great city. The Pottawattomies who are present in the Indian village at this centennial celebration believe as did their chief, and it was but little more than a year ago when many of them seriously considered the coming to Chicago to squat upon certain lands, in the hope that such action would call attention to their claim and force its settlement.

After the ancestors of the Indians now gathered in Chicago had been removed from the neighborhood of the city to different reservations, it fell to the lot of the Pottawattomies to be sent into Indiana and Michigan. Near Twin Lakes, Indiana, the Indians, many of whom were Christians, had a little chapel. According to the Pottawattomie version of the affair, they were told one day, just twenty-two years after the fight in Chicago, that their clergyman wished them to go to the little church. As many of the Indians as could do so crowded into the building, and while there they were seized by soldiers and forced to take up the march under a military guard for a new reservation in the west.

The other Pottawattomies and some of the Menominees, knowing that it would be useless to resist the force of the government, went west peacefully, the only band remaining being that under Pokagon,



T. R. RODDY (WHITE BUFFALO).

which since that time has lived in Michigan, though a few scattered families are in Indiana.

The block house which is shown close to the Indian village is a replica of one built by Captain John Whistler as a part of the defenses of the first fortification on the Chicago river. It was not known until the year 1897 that there was any accurate description of the first fort in existence. Then it was that a search of the government archives disclosed the original plans of Captain Whistler, drawn by his own hand ninety-four years before. From these plans a model of the first fort was made and it is now on exhibition in the rooms of the Chicago Historical Society. Captain Whistler's plan showed that the idea which had been held of the construction of the first fort was erroneous. The block house which the Indians of the village will attack is the counterpart of one which stood at the northwest corner of the first Fort Dearborn, at a spot where to-day the river flows under Rush Street bridge.

There probably never again will be given an opportunity to see a gathering of Indians like the one within the compass of this village. Sadly enough, when Chicago comes to celebrate its second centennial there probably will be left no recognizable remnant of these five assembled tribes. Chicago to-day bids them hail, and hopes that the day long may be deferred before the other and final word, farewell, must be spoken.





NOGINKAH, ACTING CHIEF OF WINNEBAGOS, WIFE AND CHILD.

Indian Village Program

Official Program of Events in connection with the Indian Village
in Lincoln Park, as announced by
GEO. H. JENNEY, Chairman of the Entertainment Committee

Saturday, September 26, 9 a. m.—Indians arrive at Chicago & Northwestern Railway Station and go to Lincoln Park, where they will erect their camp.

Represented in the party will be the following tribes:

NAME OF TRIBE	CHIEF IN COMMAND
Winnebago	No-gin-kah
Chippewa	Wa-go-ne-bash (Chicag)
Pottawattomie	Po-ka-gon
Sac and Fox	Push-a-ta-nee-kah
Menominee	Neopeta
Ottawa	Blackbird

Sunday Afternoon, September 27.—Reunion of different tribes, with Indian religious exercises.

Monday, September 28, at 10 a. m. and 5 p. m., and each day following until Thursday night, a program of events will be made up from the following list, varied each day:

Canoe portaging, canoe racing, canoe tilting.
Exhibition of war-club and tomahawk exercises.
Bow and arrow shooting.
Gambling games.
Taking down and erecting wigwams by squaws.
Exhibition of la crosse playing.
Council meeting, with addresses by the chiefs.
Presentation of Friendship Drum.
Dancing.

The following are the principal dances:

Squaw dance	Buffalo dance
Green Corn dance	War dance
Snake dance	Scalp dance
Brave Man dance	

