

CHAPTER I

As we turn back the pages of time, to the year 1634, we can see Jean Nicolet the first white man who is known to have stood upon the soil of Illinois. He was an agent for the "Company of the Hundred Associates," which were from Quebec and ruled the basin of the St. Lawrence. His trip covered a period between July, 1634 and December, 1635. He went to the far southwest. He had come by canoe by route of Mackinac, Green Bay and the Fox River of Wisconsin. The Winnebagoes inhabited that area of which he visited. These were called the Eastern Woodland Indians. Other major tribes of the northwest were: Abnaki, Delaware, Erie, Fox, Huron, Illinois, Iroquois, Kickapoo, Mahican, Malecite, Massachusettes, Menominee, Miami, Mohigan, Narraganset, Ojibwa, Pottawattami, Sauk, Susquehanna and Wampanoog.

Nicolet, then returned by the way he had come, visiting along the way the Pottawattamies.

The Pottawattamies were from the Algonquin Tribes. They inhabited much of the Green Bay area and the Jesuit Fathers had visited their village in 1670 and they could have been the first white men to have seen them in their home.

At that time the Green Bay area was their permanent residence, although they did extend their visits over much of the territory around Lake Superior. The Jesuit Fathers who had frequently visited their homes at Green Bay, had seen delegations of them as early as 1665 around Lake Superior.

Father Marquette was appointed in 1670, to the Illinois Mission and in 1673, Louis Joliet had come down the Wisconsin, from the portage where Nicolet had turned back and continued on the Mississippi to the Wabash.

Returning from this point they crossed the country of the Illinois by ascending the River of that name, making a brief visit at their Village of Kaskaskia. Then passing by the place of later Chicago, along the north shore, they came by canoe to Green Bay.

Marquette, in 1674, visited the borders of Lake County in company with two bands of Illinois and Pottawattamies, journeying to the Kaskaskia Village. Making short voyages along the western shore, they came to the bluffs at the Milwaukee River, where the weather could not permit them to continue.

Then the course lay past the woods to a prairie sixty miles from the Chicago Portage. Here, apparently at the Root River, the Indians left them and went overland by the prairies, while Marquette went on by canoe to the Chicago River Portage. Here he became ill and remained in a cabin over the winter of a friend of his. His name was Pierre Moreau, who was a French trader and a surgeon.

In April he visited once more the Kaskaskia Village, which was a brief stay. He then started for Green Bay, but died on the journey around the south end of Lake Michigan.

The Pottawattamies began to emigrate to the south and east. They occupied the southern peninsula of Michigan, North Eastern Illinois

and the northern part of Indiana. Their moving into Illinois was sometimes accomplished with tolerance on the part of the Illinois tribes and sometimes with actual violence. Their emigration divided them into two classes. The Pottawattamies of Michigan and Indiana were classified as those of the woods, and those of Illinois as those of the prairie.

The possession of this territory by the Pottawattamies date from the siege of Starved Rock and the extinction of the Illinois.

The Pottawattamies and Ottawas supposed that the Illinois were an additional help in the murder of Pontiac, who was killed in 1769 by an Illinois Indian. It is said, he was bribed, for the deed, with a barrel of whiskey.

This great Indian chieftain was loved and obeyed by the Ottawas and they sought vengeance for his death upon the unlucky Illinois. Their permanent occupation of Starved Rock was established soon after Pontiac's death.

The Pottawattamies were of dominating importance in the area there after and even before.

In 1763, they sent a delegation of 450 warriors to the Algonquin Conference at Niagra Falls, and as we all know, they were the last Indians to yield their place in this state to the certainty westward march of the white man.

As was stated before, the Pottawattamies of the woods were different than their western brothers, the Pottawattamies of the prairie. They were easily influenced by civilization and religion. They took kindly

to agriculture, but their western brothers despised the cultivation of the soil and paid little attention to civilization and religion of the white man. They thought that to be fine for the white man, but not for them. They enjoyed their wild roving life of the prairie. They never did make a permanent settlement anywhere. They roamed across the wide prairies, from one grove of timber to another. They were either single families or in small bands. They had very little to carry and took their children and ponies. They traveled the most direct routes and patronized prominent trading posts.

These primitive highways served as guides to our early settlers who used them with great confidence.

These Pottawattamies were tall, fierce and showed great pride. Their wigwams were portable made of rushes, woven and lapped, simply together. This material was wound around a framework of poles, meeting at the top. There was a hole in the apex of the roof, enabling the smoke to escape from the fire which was in the center. The floor was mats made of the same material, which were spread around the fire. They had beds made of buffalo robes and deer skins thrown over the mats. The door was just a simple opening covered with a robe.

The Chippewas and the Ottawas were firm allies of the Pottawattamies. These three tribes were very closely related, not only as friends, but by ties of blood and kinship. They generally always joined in signing treaties. Some writers claim they were formerly one nation. The Pottawattamies, in the War of 1812, were at least in part, against the United States. Their power was severely felt by the British when

at war with the French and in the later Indian war led by Pontiac in 1763.

In 1832, during the Blackhawk War, they remained true to our government. They had also participated in the Battle of Tippecanoe and stamped their names forever on the history of Chicago by the Fort Dearborn Massacre.

This fort was built near the mouth of the Chicago River, close to the site of Chicago's present day Michigan Avenue Bridge. There were soldiers under the command of Captain John Whistler, who built the fort in 1803. It was named after General Henry Dearborn.

The fort consisted of a double stockade, with block houses on two corners, enclosed log barracks, stables, and an Indian agency.

A troop of soldiers at the fort protected the few Americans on the frontier from Indian attack. Soon after the War of 1812 began, the troops and settlers were ordered to move to Fort Wayne for better safety. The soldiers feared Indian attacks on the way, and urged Captain Nathan Heald to stay inside the stockade. He insisted on obeying orders, destroyed all ammunition that could not be carried, and left the post with about 100 troops and settlers on August 15, 1812.

A band of 500 Pottawattamies attacked the Americans within a few miles of the fort, which is presently Chicago's Eighteenth Street. They killed more than half of the Americans, captured the rest, and burned the fort the next day.

Fort Dearborn was rebuilt in 1816, and torn down in 1836.

The Pottawattamies were not only actively concerned in warlike transactions, but among them were some of the most noted orators of history. Elijah M. Haines, in his book "The American Indian, 1888," made a very valuable contribution to our Indian history. It is a book of great interest, especially in regards to the different kinds of tribes and the territory which they had occupied. Mr. Haines talked with many of them personally and visited their villages. Much could be said about the Indian villages of Lake County. There were many along the Des Plaines River, the Lake Shore and on the shores of the inland lakes. In recent years, beads, arrowheads, broken pottery and implements were evidence of the Indian occupation in our area of Lake County. The Indian trails of our county have played an important role in the development of making the first locations of existing modern highways. The automobile has succeeded the stage coach and where the track of the stage coach was, it was first made by the moccasined feet of the red man.

Sheridan Road was once Green Bay Road, a highway which was in much use by stage coaches between Chicago and Milwaukee. Less than a century prior to that, the trail was used by Pottawattamies in making the same journey.

On September 26th, 1833, Chicago was a meeting place for more than 5,000 Pottawattamies, at which Lake County, lands in Illinois, and Wisconsin, totaling about 5,000,000 acres was ceded to the United States.

This was the last Indian Treaty made. At this time their residence

would be terminated, of which they occupied for more than a century and a half.

Chicago in 1833 was an important frontier village, but it was then the scene of a great and historic drama.

Charles J. Latrobe, an English writer, was touring the United States at the time the treaty was concluded. He had written a book entitled "Rambler", printed in London in 1835. He dedicated this book to Washington Irving, who was a traveling companion of his for some months.

He described the scene, from which I quote:

"When within five miles of Chicago we came to the first Indian encampment, five thousand Indians were said to be collected around this little upstart village. We found the village on our arrival crowded to excess, and we procured with great difficulty a small apartment, comfortless and noisy from its close proximity to others, but quite as good as we could have hoped for."

"The Pottawattamies were encamped on all sides..... on the wide level prairie beyond the scattered village, beneath the shelter of the low woods on the side of the small river, or to the leeward of the sand hills near the beach of the lake.

They consisted of three principal tribes, with certain adjuncts from smaller tribes. The main divisions are, the Pottawattamies of the prairie and those of the forest, and these are subdivided into district villages under their several chiefs."

"A preliminary council had been held with the chiefs some days before

our arrival. The principal commissioners had opened it, as we learned, by stating that, 'As their Great Father in Washington had heard that they wished to see their land, he had sent commissioners to treat with them.' The Indians promptly answered by their organ, 'that their Great Father in Washington must have seen a bad bird which told him a lie, for that far from wishing to sell their land, they wished to keep it.'

The commissioners, nothing daunted, replied: 'That nevertheless, as they had come together for a council, they must take the matter into consideration.' He then explains to them promptly the wishes and intentions of their Great Father, and asked their opinion thereon. Thus pressed, they looked at the sky, saw a few wondering clouds, and straightway adjourned sine die, as the weather was not clear enough for so solemn a council."

"However, as the treaty had been opened, provision was supplied to them by regular rations; and the same night they had great rejoicing danced the war dance, and kept the eyes and ears of all open by running and howling about the village."

"Such was the state of affairs on our arrival. Companies of old warriors might be seen sitting smoking under every bush; arguing, palavering or 'pow-wow' with great earnestness; but there seemed no possibility of bringing them to another council in a hurry."

"Next in rank to the officers and commissioners, may be noticed certain store keepers and merchants here; looking either to the influx of new settlers establishing themselves in the neighborhood, or those

passing yet further to the westward, for custom and profit; not to forget the chance of extraordinary occasions like present. Add to these a doctor or two, two or three lawyers, a land agent, and five or six hotel keepers. These may be considered as stationary, and proprietors of the half a hundred clap-board houses around you."

"Then for the birds of passage, exclusive of the Pottawattamies, of whom more anon..... and emigrants and land speculators, as numerous as the sands. You will find horse dealers and horse stealers, rogues of every description, white, black, brown and red, half-breeds, quarter-breeds, and men of no breed at all, dealers in pigs, poultry, and potatoes, men pursuing Indian claims, some for tracts of land, others like our friend Snipe (one of his stage coach companions on the way), for pigs which wolves have eaten, creditors of the tribes, or of particular Indians, who know that they have no chance of getting their money if they do not get it from the government agents, sharpers of every degree; peddlers, grog-sellers, Indian traders of every description, and contractors to supply the Pottawattamies with food. The little village was in an uproar from morning to night, and from night to morning; for during the hours of darkness, when the housed portion of the population of Chicago strove to obtain repose in the crowded plank edifice of the village, the Indians howled, sang, wept, yelled and whooped in their encampments."

"I loved to stroll out toward sunset across the river, and gaze upon the level horizon, stretching to the northwest over the surface of the prairie, dotted with innumerable objects far and near. Not far

from the river lay many groups of tents constructed of course canvas, blankets, and mats, and surmounted by poles, supporting meat, moccasins and rags.

Their vicinity was always enlivened by various painted Indian figures, dressed in the most gaudy attire. The interior of the hovels generally displayed a confined area, perhaps covered with a few half-rotten mats or shavings, upon which men, women, children and baggage were heaped pell-mell."

"Far and wide the grassy prairie teemed with figures; warriors mounted or on foot, squaws and horses, here a race between three or four Indian ponies, each carrying a double rider, whooping and yelling like fiends. There a solitary horseman, with a long spear, turbaned like an Arab, scouring along at full speed, groups of hobbled horses; Indian dogs and children, or a grove conclave of gray chiefs seated on the grass in consultation."

"It was amusing to wind silently from group to group, here noting the raised knife, the sudden drunken brawl, quashed by the good-natured and even playful interference of the neighbors, there a party, breaking up their encampment, and falling with their little train of loaded ponies and wolfish dogs into the deep, black narrow trail running to the north. (Green Bay Road previously referred to).

You peep into a wigwam and see a domestic feud; the chief sitting in dogged silence on the mat, while the women, of which there were commonly two or three in every dwelling, and who appeared every evening more elevated with the fumes of whiskey than the males, read him a

lecture.

From another tent a constant voice of wrangling and weeping would proceed, when suddenly an offended fair one would draw the mat aside, and taking a youth standing without by the hand, lead him apart, and sitting down on the grass, set up the most indescribable whine as she told her grief. Then forward comes an Indian, staggering with his chum from a debauch; he is met by his squaw, with her child dangling in a fold of her blanket behind, and the sobbing and weeping which accompanies her whining appeal to him, as she hangs to his hand, would melt your heart, if you did not see that she was quite as tipsy as himself."

"It is a grievous thing that government is not strong handed enough to put a stop to the shameful and scandalous sale of whiskey to those poor miserable wretches. But here lies casks of it for sale under the very eyes of the commissioners, met together for purposes which demand that sobriety should be maintained, were it only that no one should be able to lay at their door an accusation of unfair dealing, and of having taken advantage of the helpless Indian in a bargain, whereby the people of the United States were to be so greatly the gainers."

"Day after day passed. It was in vain that the signal gun from the fort gave notice of an assemblage of chiefs at the council fire. Reasons were always found for its delay. One day an influential chief was not in the way; another the sky looked cloudy, and the Indians never performs an important business except the sky be clear.

At length, on September 21st, the Pottawattamies resolved to meet the commissioners. We were politely invited to be present."

"The council fire was lighted under a spacious open shed on a green meadow on the opposite side of the river from that on which the fort stood, (near the north end of present day Rush Street Bridge), from the difficulty of getting all together, it was late in the afternoon when they assembled. There might be twenty or thirty chiefs present, seated at the lower end of the enclosure, while the commissioners, interpreters, etc., were at the upper. The palover was opened by the principal commissioner."

"The relative positions of the commissioners and the whites before the council fire, and that of the red children of the forest and the prairie, were to me strikingly impressive. The glorious light of the setting sun streaming in under the low roof of the council house, fell full on the countenance of the former as they faced the west, while the pale light of the east hardly lighted up the dark and painted lineaments of the poor Indians, whose souls evidently clave to their birthright in that quarter. Even though convinced of the necessity of their removal, my heart bled for them in their desolation and decline. Ignorant and degraded as they may have been in their original state, their degradation is now ten-fold, after years of intercourse with the whites; and their speedy disappearance from the earth appears as certain as though it were already sealed and accomplished."

"Your own reflections will lead you to form the conclusion, and it will be a just one, that even if he had the will, the power would be

wanting, for the Indian to keep his territory, and that the business of arranging the terms of an Indian treaty, whatever it might have been 200 years ago, while the Indian tribes had not, as now, thrown aside the rude but vigorous intellectual character which distinguished many among them, now lies chiefly between the various traders, agents, creditors and half-breeds of the tribes, on whom custom and necessity have made the degraded chiefs dependent, and the government agents. When the former have seen matters so far arranged that self interests and various schemes and claims are likely to be fulfilled and allowed to their heart's content. The silent acquiescence of the Indians follows of course; and till this is the case, the treaty can never be amicably effected. In fine, before we quitted Chicago, on the 25th, three or four days later, the treaty with the Pottawattamies was concluded, the commissioners putting their hands, and the assembled chiefs their paws to the same."

Thus as so ably described by the English writer, was consummated the transfer by which Illinois ceased to be the land of the Indian. The Indians received as compensation for this vast grant, \$100,000 "to satisfy sundry individuals in behalf of whom reservations were asked, which the commissioners refused to grant;"

\$175,000 to "satisfy the claims made against the Indians; "\$100,000 to be paid in goods and provisions; \$280,000 to be paid in an annuity of \$14,000 each year for twenty years; \$150,000 "to be applied to the erection of mills, farm houses, blacksmith shops, agricultural improvements," etc., and \$70,000 "for purposes of education and the

encouragement of the domestic arts."

One remarkable feature of this treaty is the fact by its provisions some five hundred to one thousand persons, most of them with no Indian blood in their veins, derived personal gain from the transaction; the allowance and payment of individual claims, ranging in amounts from a few dollars to many thousands, and, as already noted, about one-third of the cash consideration was thus disbursed. Among the individual beneficiaries also appear the following: Alexander Robinson, \$10,000 cash and \$300 annuity, "in addition to annuities already granted; "Billy Caldwell, \$10,000 cash and \$400 annuity, "in addition to annuities already granted; "John Kinzie Clark \$400; allowances to Antoine Quilmette and his family, then living on the present site of Wilmette Village and from whom that village was named; "John K. Clark's Indian children \$400," and various allowances to the Kinzie family. The mere reading of the treaty demonstrates that the "Birds of Passage, "land speculators," "men pursuing Indian claims," "creditors of the tribe," "sharppers of every degree," and "Indian traders of every description," so graphically described by the English tourist, constituted no small minority of the assembly at Chicago on this occasion, or of those who had to do with framing that part of the treaty that provided for the payment of individual claims.

Three years after the signing of this last treaty and in the years 1835 and 1836 the Pottawattamies, or at least most of them, then some 5,000 in number, were removed west of the Mississippi into Missouri, near Fort Leavenworth. They remained there but one or two

years on account of the hostility of the frontier settlers, and were again removed to council bluffs, and in a few years again to a reservation in Kansas where three or four hundred of their number still exist, while others are in the Indian territory. Their history since leaving Illinois has been in the main that all the Indian tribes, a steady dwindling, until less than one-fourth of their number in 1836 now remain.

(The above statements were taken from the History of Lake County, by Halsey, 1912.)

These transactions are all within the memory of many living citizens. A little more than half a century has rolled by since these children of the prairie and of the forest took their farewell look at old Lake Michigan and crossed for the last time, in their westward journey, the plains and woods and streams of the land of the Illinois. Their fathers entered here with strong and bloody hands; peaceably, yet by still stronger hands, have they gave the way of all their race. They have caused the white man to hear and to speak of the last of the Illinois, and soon, too soon, will the white man also hear of the last of the Pottawattamies.



Elijah W. Haines