

A HISTORY OF THE SAC AND FOX INDIANS
UNTIL AFTER THE OPENING OF THEIR RESERVATION IN OKLAHOMA

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PREFACE

Oklahomans should be conscious of the history of their state and especially proud of the history and folklore of their Indian tribes, which now number about one hundred twenty-five thousand persons. There is a need in the state that the history of these tribes be written before the old Indians and settlers pass on. It is accordingly the purpose of this paper to tell the story of the Sacs and Foxes, recording the government's dealings with them and describing the final opening of their Oklahoma reservation to white settlement.

Although the paper has involved fairly wide reading in secondary sources, most of the information, for the sake of accuracy, has been gathered from primary materials.

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Chapter I. Early History
and Customs

The story of the Sac¹ and Fox Indians parallels in a general way that of other tribes of North American Indians. To these two tribes, who formerly lived in an aboriginal state, the coming of the whites not only brought civilizing influences but also restricted their freedom and deprived them of their native habitat.

(The Sacs and Foxes are usually thought of as one tribe, perhaps as a result of the close relationship they have maintained with each other but especially as a result of their being officially treated together by the United States government.) However, each tribe has always maintained its separate identity,² and it is well, therefore, to treat of them separately before taking them up as a united group.

Of the two tribes, both of Algonquian stock, the Foxes

¹The Sacs were previously known as the Sauks. For the sake of consistency the name by which they are known at present will be used in this paper.

²Frederick Webb Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Bulletin 30 of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907-1910), I, 473.

were considered to be the less savage. Their name was formerly Meshkwakwikug or Muskwakiwuk, which means "Red Earth People," but because of the mistake of some French trappers who applied to the whole tribe the name of a single gens, they have come to be called Wagash, which, translated, means "Foxes" or "Red Foxes."³ The religious tradition of the tribe that they grew out of or were created from the red earth is interesting to those who believe the Indians to be the "lost ten tribes of Israel."⁴ Some of their neighboring tribes called them Utugamig, meaning "People of the Other Shore."⁵

When first discovered by and known to white men, the Foxes lived around Lake Winnebago in eastern Wisconsin and along the Fox river. Their ancient traditions placed their original home north of the lakes in what is now Canada and a little later on the southern shore of Lake Superior.

They were described by the French missionaries who first found them as being restless and warlike, yet brave and energetic. The Indians living near them said they were "stingy, avaricious, thieving, passionate, and

³Hodge, op. cit., p. 472.

⁴James Adair, History of the American Indians (London: 1775), pp. 14-15.

⁵Hodge, op. cit., p. 472.

quarrelsome." Like most of their neighbors, they practiced polygamy. Their canoes were built of logs or bark, and they used spears, clubs, and bows and arrows in the chase and in war.⁶

The Fox was the principal tribe of Algonquian stock with whom the French waged war. This restless and warlike people had conceived a hatred for the French because the latter had aided the Chippewas and others by furnishing them weapons to destroy the Foxes; they said the French suggested to the Chippewas that the Foxes, whom the French could neither Christianize nor commercialize, should be exterminated. (The French especially disliked the Foxes because the latter often made traveling traders pay tribute to them.) This tribe and its allied kindred tribes are credited with plundering, thieving, and murdering among their Indian neighbors and the outposts of white settlements, ranging for miles south in the Mississippi river valley, from the North lands to the Gulf. They even plotted at one time to destroy Fort Detroit. The complete extermination of the Foxes was probably prevented by the counsel of a French missionary, Nicholas Parrot, who pleaded in their cause.⁷

The Foxes' mode of life was akin to that of the

⁶Hodge, op. cit., p. 473.

⁷Ibid.

tribes of the woodland, but their spirit related them to the plains Indians. They cultivated wild rice, corn, beans, and tobacco. In the summer they dwelt in villages, their houses being built of bark and sometimes being sixty feet in length. During the winter they separated and lived in oval flag-reed buildings or lodges.

The Fox tribe had developed a strict social organization built on the gens. Their marriages were contracted outside the gens, and the gens of a family generally followed the male. The main Fox gentes were the Bear, Fox, Wolf, Elk, Big Lynx, Buffalo, Swan, Pheasant, Eagle, Sea, Sturgeon, Bass, Thunder, and Bear Potato.⁸ In the biography of a Fox Indian the gens to which he belongs is usually mentioned.

They were a primitive people, yet they had a richly endowed mythology, much of which was related to beast fables. They had, therefore, many deities of definite character. The principal one was Wisaka, the culture hero; they also believed in a cosmic substance known as munitowiw or manito. The tribe practiced a number of ceremonies, of which the principal one was the festival of the gentes.⁹ This was a social feast, sometimes of a political nature, to celebrate their membership and fellow-

⁸Hodge, op. cit., p. 473.

⁹Ibid., pp. 474-5.

ship in the particular gens to which they belonged. The food was generally prepared by the host but was sometimes brought by the members. Each guest brought his own dish, into which the host placed a generous helping of food. This the guest must eat, or, if he could not eat all of it, he must take the rest home with him. Different gentes served different types of feasts. The great feasts were held twice each year, one in spring for the new season and one in the autumn to show gratitude for ripening harvests. So America centuries ago had a Thanksgiving.

The warriors shaved their heads like the Chinese, leaving a topknot like the Romans', and used dyed horse hair and bright colored feathers for decoration. They painted the face, head, and upper part of the body. They wore the moccasins, leggings, and breech-cloths and at times, especially in winter, added blankets and robes of fine leather. They loved paint, beads, shells, feathers, bright colored ornaments, and richly dyed cloth.

In their grief, when caused by death, they mourned, blacked their faces with charcoal, fasted, and used plain dress. The burial was in the branches of a tree, upright in a shallow grave with fixed supports, or perhaps horizontally in the ground. They believed the spirit or soul went west to the land of the setting sun and that when Wisaka, the culture hero who lives in the North lands,

returns, the world will come to an end.¹⁰

Governmental records show that perhaps one could not have found a more primitive tribe of Indians within the limits of the United States than the Fox tribe was when first found by the French missionaries, near Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin.

The story and customs of the Sacs were similar to those of the Foxes. The Sacs called themselves Osakiwug, meaning "People of the Outlet" or perhaps "People of the Yellow Earth," and from this name derives that by which they are called by the whites, Sauks, Saukies, or Sacs.¹¹

The Sac Indians were, when first known to white men about 1647, savage wanderers and cruel vagabonds of the woodland country, even more barbarous than the usual roving tribes. They first introduced the torture of prisoners among the Algonquians. They were described by an early French missionary as being the most savage people he had met. Yet when the tribe made wandering trips into the South, the Spanish officers reported them as easy to deal with and not at all troublesome.¹²

¹⁰Hodge, op. cit., II, 479.

¹¹Ibid., p. 471.

¹²Alanson Skinner, Observations on the Ethnology of the Sauk Indians, Bulletin of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee (Milwaukee: Advocate Publishing Company, 1923), pp. 7-9; Hodge, op. cit., II, 475.

The civilization of the Sacs was like that of the Indians of the eastern wooded country. As they lived in a lake region, they naturally used canoes and dugouts to a great extent. When found by the French, they had developed an extensive agriculture, raising corn, squash, beans, and tobacco. They were also great hunters, spending much time the whole year around at the chase and fishing.¹³

The Sac social structure was also built on the gentes. Their gentes were the Trout, Sturgeon, Bass, Great Lynx or Fire Dragon, Sea, Fox, Wolf, Bear, Bear Potato, Elk, Swan, Grouse, Eagle, and Thunder. At one time the gentes were strictly defined; the chiefs came from the Trout and Sturgeon, while the war leaders came from the Fox gens. Each gens had one large bark house in which it celebrated the feast of the gentes, but the people lived in smaller bark houses in summer and in oval flag-reed houses in winter.

Like that of the Foxes, the religion of the Sacs was a belief in the cosmic manitos, magic forces or genii permeating the world of nature. The tribe had many religious ceremonies, the most important of which, besides the feast of the gentes, was the secret rite of the medicine men, attended by only a very select group.¹⁴

¹³Hodge, op. cit., II, 476.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 479; Skinner, op. cit., pp. 37-8.

The Sac society was divided into moieties for the purpose of playing games and holding contests. The moieties were called the Kishko and the Oskush. The first offspring in the family went into the moiety opposite to that of the father, the second into the father's moiety, and so on in alternate rotation.¹⁵

At some time the Sacs acquired an alphabet and an ability to write, for it is recorded they were able to keep up a correspondence among themselves. Apparently the alphabet was the work of the early French missionaries.¹⁶

One of the earliest reports of the Sacs and Foxes as having a fairly close relationship is that of the Jesuit priest, Father Allouez, who in 1667 preached to them and baptized some of their children. A few years later the two tribes were again mentioned together when they joined with a band of Hurons to fight the Sioux, who put them to great rout.¹⁷

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Sacs divided into two factions, one attached to the Foxes and the other to the French. However, in 1733 a few Foxes sought asylum with the Sacs from the French, and

¹⁵Skinner, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

¹⁶Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, The North Americans of Yesterday (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 53.

¹⁷Hodge, op. cit., II, 474.

when the French attempted to take the Foxes by force, the Sacs killed the French leader and several of his soldiers. This action reunited the Sacs and brought about a close confederation of the two tribes, who moved from Wisconsin into Iowa, probably to avoid the French.¹⁸ Not until 1780, however, when the Foxes, united with the Sioux against the Chippewas, were almost annihilated, did there come a very close union between the two tribes. The remnant of the Foxes incorporated with the Sacs but nevertheless retained their own tribal government.¹⁹

The population of the Sac and Fox tribes at their best was 3,500 and 3,000 respectively. The smallpox at one time killed about half of the tribe. Later in their history the Black Hawk War and its effects also took a heavy toll of lives.

The united tribes have shown themselves capable of adapting themselves to civilized ways. The Sacs and Foxes were good traders when at peace. They ordinarily liked white people but were more often than not at war with some roving band of Indians. They were uncompromising enemies of certain tribes, and to them is justly attributed the virtual destruction of the Illinois, Cahokian, Kaskas-

¹⁸Hodge, *op. cit.*, II, 475.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, I, 473.

kia, and Peoria Indian tribes. They were active rather than passive in their relationships with others, so active, in fact, that in times past they have claimed different parts of the country in the Mississippi Valley from the Great Lakes to the Gulf.²⁰

(The story of these two tribes, now known as one, is like the story of other American Indian tribes and not unlike the story of the aborigines of the other countries of the world under the advancing influence of the white races. They were ever pushed westward, moved and removed until in exchange for originally large holdings of land they now own a few allotments in the small strip of country known as the Sac and Fox reservation in the State of Oklahoma.)

²⁰American State Papers, Indian Affairs, 13 Cong., I, 711.

Chapter II. Relationship With the United States
Until the Removal Into Indian Territory

In 1789 the United States, a new nation, made its first treaty with the Sac and Fox Indians, among other tribes. The fifteen articles of the treaty provided for the return of any white prisoners held by the Indians, the settlement of tribal boundary lines, a natural strip of ground to be used as a hunting ground for the tribes, the delivery by the tribe to the United States of any tribesman accused of murdering a tribesman, the punishment of any horse thieves among the tribes, the licensing of traders, and the punishment for failure to procure this license. By the treaty the Sacs and Foxes agreed to prevent any enemy nation from crossing their lands to make war on the United States and to make war on any nation who should make such an attempt, and the United States agreed to punish intruders on Indian lands and to establish trading posts on the lands. The articles defined the boundaries of the Detroit trading post district and of the post district of Michilimackinac, and the Indians acknowledged the United States as protector of the tribes.¹

¹Charles J. Kappler, Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II, 18-23.

In 1804 a treaty was arranged by William Henry Harrison, then Indian commissioner for the government, with a portion of the Sac and Fox tribes at St. Louis, the Missouri River Sacs, a treaty purporting to be with the whole of the united tribes. The second article follows:

The general boundary line between the lands of the United States and of the said Indian tribes shall be as follows, to wit: Beginning at a point on the Missouri river opposite to the mouth of the Gasconade river; thence in a direct course so as to strike the river Jeffreon at the distance of thirty miles from its mouth, and down the said Jeffreon to the Mississippi, thence up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Ouisconsing river and up the same to a point which shall be thirty-six miles in a direct line to the point where the Fox river (a branch of the Illinois) leaves the small lake called Sakaegan, thence down the Fox river to the Illinois river, and down the same to the Mississippi. And the said tribes, for and in consideration of the friendship and protection of the United States which is now extended to them, of the goods (to the value of two thousand two hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty cents) which are now delivered, and of the annuity hereinafter stipulated to be paid, do hereby cede and relinquish forever to the United States all the lands included within the above-described boundary.

Article 3 provided that the United States should deliver yearly to the Sac and Fox tribes one thousand dollars worth of goods.²

This agreement caused great consternation and anger among the other Sacs and Foxes, and the majority of the Foxes withdrew from the united group to settle in Iowa.

²Kappler, op. cit., p. 75.

Thus, as a result of the treaty of 1804 at St. Louis, the tribe was divided into three parts: (1) the main body of the Mississippi Sacs and Foxes, (2) the Mississippi Sacs and Foxes of Iowa, and (3) the Missouri Sacs and Foxes, who because of their deed were afraid of the rest of the tribe and stayed away from them. (In reality, the treaty had been a misunderstanding on the part of the Indians, and it was their feeling at having been swindled of their just rights that eventually led to the Black Hawk War.³)

On September 13, 1815, at Portage des Sioux, the United States concluded a treaty in which the Sacs of Missouri assented to the St. Louis treaty and agreed to take no part with the Sacs of Rock river (the main body of the Sacs and Foxes), who, under Black Hawk, had fought on the side of the British in the War of 1812 and who were still causing trouble because of the misunderstanding of the earlier treaty.⁴ On September 14, 1815, a like treaty was made with the Fox chiefs.⁵ Finally, on May 13, 1816, a treaty was made with the Sacs of Rock river in order to carry out the stipulations of the Treaty of Ghent between the United States and Great Britain. By the treaty of

³Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, II, 476.

⁴Kappler, op. cit., pp. 120-1.

⁵Ibid., pp. 121-2.

1816, signed by Black Hawk, the Sacs under his leadership made peace with the United States and confirmed the St. Louis treaty.⁶

On August 4, 1824, Keokuk and others (Black Hawk's name is noticeably absent) signed a treaty by which the Sacs and Foxes relinquished their claim to the land in Missouri lying between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers in exchange for a one thousand-dollar annuity running ten years and the provision by the Government of a blacksmith and other laborers, farming utensils, and cattle.⁷

One year later the United States negotiated a treaty with several tribes, including the Sacs and Foxes and the Sioux, who had been fighting each other. By this treaty the border line between these two groups was established as being from the mouth of the Iowa river up to the source of its left fork, across to the upper fork of the Des Moines river, then to the lower fork of the Calumet river, and down to its junction with the Missouri. The Sacs and Foxes in this agreement expressly relinquished all claim to land on the east side of the Mississippi river.⁸

On July 15, 1830, another treaty was made by the government with the Sac and Fox and other tribes. By this

⁶Kappler, op. cit., pp. 154-5.

⁷Ibid., pp. 207-8.

⁸Ibid., pp. 250-1.

treaty all the Indians gave up title to their lands lying in Iowa between the Des Moines and the Missouri rivers, and the Sacs and Foxes relinquished title to a tract twenty miles wide lying between the Mississippi and Des Moines rivers. The land between the Des Moines and Missouri was to be assigned and allotted to the Indians. In return for these cessions the Indians should have annuities and certain other allowances.⁹

None of the cessions to the United States had been met with joy by Black Hawk, now a subordinate chief of the Sacs, and after this last treaty he began actively among the various tribes of Indians to use his influence against the government. His influence was great, for he was well known as a brave and patriotic warrior. A member of the Thunder gens, he had won high honors on the warpath by the age of 15. At 17 he led a small group of warriors in an attack on an Osage camp of one hundred Indians. He was successful in this attempt and returned with his first scalp. A little later he blundered, however, by laying siege to a deserted village. His warriors left him, except five with whom he continued, feeling disgraced, disappointed, and angry. He soon returned to his village bearing two scalps and thereby felt that his honor was

⁹Kappler, op. cit., pp. 305-7.

restored. Before reaching 20 years of age he was called to war against the Osage Indians. Each tribe was represented by some two hundred warriors. More than half of the enemy was destroyed, Black Hawk killing five of them in open combat. While on a raid against the Cherokees, he and his party killed twenty-eight opponents and lost but seven of their own party. Black Hawk lost his desire to go on the warpath for a period of five years because his father was one of the seven men killed. His father was greatly mourned by the tribe because he was their chief medicine man. At the end of the five-year period Black Hawk again dug up the hatchet and went on the warpath against the Osages and Cherokees, killing every soul save two squaws in some forty enemy Indian villages. On this rampage Black Hawk killed nine himself. On a later excursion he came upon four men and refused to kill them, calling it not honorable to kill so few; yet a woman of the group he compelled to go to his camp. In the second war with England Black Hawk led most of his tribe to unite with the British, and he did the British good service by scourging the outlying American settlements.¹⁰

Now, (in 1831, Black Hawk attempted to form an alliance with the Winnebago, Pottawatomie, and Kickapoo bands in a

¹⁰Hodge, op. cit., I, 150-2.

united action against the aggression of the whites) this was contradictory to the wishes of his principal chief, Keokuk, who humbly submitted to the uncompromising will of the whites and moved beyond the boundary line provided by treaty. Indeed, Keokuk assumed so passive an attitude in the Black Hawk War that he lost a great deal of his prestige.¹¹

As a result of the reported activities of Black Hawk, Governor Reynolds of Illinois sent for the state militia. General Gaines, seeking to prevent active hostilities, issued a call for Black Hawk to appear at Fort Armstrong, but this meeting failed to accomplish anything. On June 15, 1831, the militia marched upon Black Hawk's village, and as Black Hawk and his party had escaped, General Gaines ordered the village burned. Gaines then gave orders that all the enlisted warriors should appear in person for a peace conference, and on June 30 Black Hawk and twenty-seven of his warriors signed a treaty to give up their hostilities and retire to the west side of the Mississippi river.

In the months following his removal Black Hawk sent messengers to all kindred and friendly tribes to win them to his interest, and he even endeavored, unsuccessfully

¹¹Hodge, op. cit., I, 673.

however, to remove the authority of Keokuk or force him to make war on the whites. In April of 1832 General Atkinson was ordered to bring in the chief members of a band of Sacs and Foxes who had the year before massacred some Menominee in retaliation for the previous killing of some Sacs and Foxes. Arriving at the Des Moines river, he found that Black Hawk had crossed the Mississippi river back into Illinois four days previously with a band of warriors. The militia was called out, and General Atkinson warned the settlers and collected all of the regular troops available.

Meanwhile, (Black Hawk marched up Rock river seeking to be united with the Winnebagoes and Pottawatomies, but only a small number of these tribesmen answered to his call.) The rest, indeed, later betrayed him. The Illinois soldiers were now following him up the river, but they knew little of Indian warfare and were also handicapped by jealousy among their officers. But one group followed Black Hawk so closely that three warriors were sent back bearing the white flag of truce; however, Indians lurking in the woods near the scene caused uneasiness and fear among the whites, and in the excitement one Indian was shot. The other Indians ran, and the excited whites hastily followed in a disorganized manner. Having pursued for a great distance, they became victims of a swift

attack by Black Hawk and a band of fierce warriors who completely routed the white soldiers. This occurred on May 14, 1832.¹²

Black Hawk, encouraged by success and inspired by revengeful hatred, now scouted up and down the country from north to south attacking the western white settlements and causing much fear, anxiety, and trouble; he robbed and murdered, and burned white villages. The militia put up a noble attempt to retaliate but were able to capture only a few small bands of Indians.

Black Hawk now united all his forces and on June 24 planned and attempted to carry out an attack on Apple River Fort. He had, however, not guessed the great number of whites and was effectively repulsed. The next day he was defeated by Major Dement's battalion, but the whites paid a heavy price in the loss of life. A month later when attempting to gain the west side of the Wisconsin, Black Hawk was attacked by a volunteer army commanded by General James D. Henry; the Indian band was cut to pieces, and many of the warriors were killed or wounded. With his remaining tribesmen Black Hawk sought to find rest beyond

¹²Hodge, op. cit., I, 151-2; Skinner, op. cit., p. 8. Charles D. Brownell makes the point that historians usually call an Indian victory a massacre but dignify Black Hawk's encounter by calling it a war. The History of the Indian Races of North and South America (Hartford: Hurlburt, S. and Company, 1865), p. 483.

the Mississippi river. He and his band came to the mouth of Bad Axe river and were in the act of crossing when discovered by a steamship, the Warrior, which trained its cannon on them. The next day, August 5, advancing soldiers led by General Atkinson arrived on the scene, attacked the Indians, and in a deadly fight killed a large number; forty were made captives and the rest attempted to escape by way of the river. Many of the Indians who gained the other side were attacked and defeated by a band of Sioux.

Black Hawk and his principal warrior, Nahpope, were cunning enough to get away and fled to the Northland. However, word was spread, people were sent in pursuit, and Black Hawk and Nahpope were soon made prisoners by some Winnebagoes who had chosen to remain loyal to the whites. Black Hawk was sent by the United States government to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, where he was kept a prisoner for a month. The government then decided on the wise plan of sending him on a tour of the East. He attracted much attention. Five years later the government sent him on another Eastern tour, this time with Chief Keokuk. After this tour he was allowed to retire to Des Moines river by Iowaville, where he died October 3 of the following year.¹³

This plan of the government's in sending these two

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¹³Hodge, op. cit., I, 152.

great leaders of the Sacs and Foxes on a tour of the East proved to be very successful, for the good both of the whites and of the Indians. The Indians had been pushed far to the West for so many years that many of the people of the Eastern country had never seen an Indian warrior, so everywhere these chiefs were presented they proved to be of great interest and gave the Eastern whites a new desire to learn more of the West. On the other hand, the Indians who had been pushed to the West beyond the thinly settled frontier had seen but few whites and therefore many times entertained the idea that if all Indian tribes would unite, they could run the whites out and repossess their country. Having little knowledge of the Eastern settlements of the United States, they did not realize that there were literally millions of whites. On this tour of the East Keokuk and Black Hawk both saw that it was a hopeless task for the Indians to attempt to stand against the advance of the whites. They bore these newly learned facts to their kindred and doubtlessly saved much spilling of blood.

After the capture of Black Hawk and the annihilation of his band, a treaty was made with the Sac and Fox tribe on September 21, 1832, at Fort Armstrong. By this treaty the United States, "partly as indemnity for the expense incurred, and partly to secure the future safety and tran-

quillity of the invaded frontier," was ceded a tract of Sac and Fox country "more than proportional to the numbers of the hostile band who have been so conquered and subdued." The confederated tribes had left to them in Iowa four hundred square miles on the Iowa river. The United States "in consideration of the great extent of the foregoing cession" agreed to pay a twenty thousand-dollar annuity for thirty years and to make other concessions. It was provided, however, that Black Hawk, Nahpope, and others should be held as hostages and that the remnant of Black Hawk's band should be dispersed among the various bands of the two tribes.¹⁴

In these negotiations Keokuk played so deftly into the government's hands that he was appointed Sac chief, an action that angered many.¹⁵ Perhaps, however, it was Keokuk's action here that led him to be called the "forest chieftain whose deportment is uniformly correct."¹⁶

(In the next thirty years there was consummated a series of treaties between the United States and the Sac and Fox tribes, all the treaties being agreements either to cede land to the government or to release concessions

¹⁴Kappler, op. cit., pp. 349-51.

¹⁵Hodge, op. cit., I, 673-4.

¹⁶Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, History of the Indian Tribes of North America (Philadelphia: Rice, Rutter, and Company, 1870), II, 80.

formerly granted by the government.)

On September 17, 1836, a treaty was made by which the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri (residing west of Missouri) relinquished their claim to the lands lying between what was then the State of Missouri and the Missouri river, land granted them six years earlier, and received in return two hundred sections lying in southeast Nebraska on the south side of the Missouri and adjoining the Great Nemaha river. They received also several thousand dollars and were furnished a farmer, a blacksmith, a schoolmaster, an interpreter, three houses, agricultural implements, rations for one year, a ferry boat, livestock, a mill, and other commodities.¹⁷ Ten days later the main body of the Sacs and Foxes released their rights to the same land.¹⁸ The following day, by two separate treaties, they ceded the four hundred sections of land in Iowa granted them at the close of the Black Hawk War for two ten thousand-dollar annuities, running for ten years, and other considerations.¹⁹

On October 21, 1837, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs negotiated in Washington, D.C., a treaty with the

¹⁷Kappler, op. cit., pp. 468-9.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 473.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 474-8.

chiefs and head-men of the Sac and Fox tribes by which the tribes ceded one and one-quarter million acres of land lying west of Missouri to the government. For this land the United States agreed to expend a total of \$377,000.²⁰ On the same day the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri for \$160,000 ceded their rights to all land between the Missouri and the Mississippi rivers and agreed to certain changes in the treaties of 1804, 1824, 1825, 1830, and 1836, which had not been carried out completely by either the United States government or the Indians themselves.²¹

On October 11, 1842, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs concluded a treaty with the Sac and Fox Nation at their agency in the Territory of Iowa, in which the tribes agreed to cede to the United States all of their land west of the Mississippi river. The treaty, however, permitted the tribes to remain on the western part of this land for a period of three years after the ratification of the treaty, and it provided that the tribes should be granted "a suitable tract of land for a permanent and perpetual residence for them and their descendants" to be located on the Missouri river. The government also agreed to pay the tribes an annuity of 5 per cent on the sum of eight hundred

²⁰Kappler, op. cit., pp. 495-6.

²¹Ibid., pp. 497-8.

thousand dollars and to pay debts of the tribes amounting to the sum of \$258,566.34, to furnish on the land described gunsmith and blacksmith tools and supplies necessary for the tribes, and to do anything that the President deemed necessary for the comfort, education, and civilization of the tribes.²²

On May 18, 1854, the Sac and Fox band of Missouri ceded to the United States one hundred and fifty of the two hundred sections of land in southeastern Nebraska granted them eighteen years before, for which the United States agreed to pay the Indians \$48,000. It was agreed to permit each Indian to select a homestead on the lands not ceded provided the Indian would cultivate and improve it, to permit the Indians to retain the section of land upon which their grist mill was located together with the mill and its improvements, and to permit the government to adopt such a policy in the management of Indian affairs as would "be most beneficial to them."²³

On October 1, 1859, Alfred B. Greenwood, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, concluded a treaty at the Sac and Fox agency in Kansas in which the main body of the Sac and Fox Nation agreed to abolish the tenure of land in common by

²²Kappler, op. cit., pp. 546-9.

²³Ibid., pp. 631-3.

which they there held their lands and accept allotments in severalty to which they agreed to move. The debts of the Indians were to be paid out of the sale of their lands, but should the proceeds of the sale of surplus lands be insufficient for the payment of the debts or should the Indians need aid in the cultivation and improvement of the lands, the Secretary of the Interior was to supply the necessary funds out of money due the Indians from former treaties. It was also agreed that

the President, with the assent of Congress, shall have full power to modify or change any of the provisions of former treaties with the Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi in such manner and to whatever extent he may judge to be necessary and expedient for their welfare and best interests.²⁴

As the Sac and Fox Nation was somewhat scattered, it was agreed in this treaty that all divisions should come together as one band and that all who failed to re-unite within one year after the ratification of the treaty should thenceforth be barred from the benefits of the treaty.²⁵ This stipulation seemed to lay the foundation for the final removal treaty of eight years later.

The Foxes, who had been away on a hunt, returned after the treaty was made and were quite angry about it. The Fox chief refused to ratify it and in consequence

²⁴Kappler, op. cit., p. 798.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 798-9.

was deprived of his citizenship. He and most of his tribe went back to Iowa, where a few of them had stayed previously, and there purchased an eighty-acre tract on which to live.²⁶

On March 6, 1861, Daniel Vanderslice, United States Indian agent at the Great Nemaha agency, Nebraska Territory, concluded a treaty with the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri and the Iowas in which the Sacs and Foxes agreed to sell their lands on the Great Nemaha river amounting to 33,000 acres and to buy from the Iowas lands on No-hearts creek. Certain concessions were also made to the band by the government.

It was not until the beginning of the 1860's that the Sacs and Foxes began to accept the appurtenances of civilization, and even then they were slow to do so. Black Hawk before his death had enjoined them never to adopt the habits of the whites, and the tribe heeded him, fearing acceptance of white customs would bring annihilation as a tribe. About the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, however, a few of the 1,180 Sacs and Foxes of Mississippi in Kansas began to live in houses and to wear shoes and hats; by this time they also had become toppers, and the

²⁶Francis E. Leupp, The Indian and His Problem (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 271; Hodge, op. cit., II, 474.

bad whiskey that they drank caused many deaths.²⁷

By 1864 there was less drinking, but there were also fewer Indians.²⁸ Not all of the reduction in population, however, was the result of drink, for a few of the Sacs and Foxes in Kansas had moved to Iowa to join those who had returned to that state and who were there living in great destitution. By 1866 there were 766 Sacs and Foxes of Mississippi in Kansas, 230 Sacs and Foxes of Mississippi in Iowa, and about 80 Sacs and Foxes of Missouri in Nebraska.²⁹

Kansas was rapidly being settled, and the Indians were beginning to feel they no longer had sufficient breathing space. Some of them, dissatisfied, rejoined the Iowa group, who in 1867 were given an Indian agent and granted part of the Kansas band's annuities.³⁰ Many of those remaining in Kansas wanted to move into Indian Territory, where they felt they could be away from a civilization they were yet somewhat averse to.

Events following the close of the Civil War brought

²⁷Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1862 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), p. 106.

²⁸Ibid., 1864, p. 338.

²⁹Ibid., 1866, p. 52.

³⁰Ibid., 1867, p. 347.

the opportunity many of the Indians were looking for. After the great conflict when it became necessary for the Five Civilized Tribes to renew or re-establish their treaty rights with the United States because of having violated agreements not to take up arms against the government, these Indians were required by the new treaties to give up certain of their lands in the Indian Territory as a punishment.³¹ The government proceeded at once to remove other bands of Indians into the Indian Territory.

In line with this procedure on the part of the government, on February 18, 1867, Lewis V. Eogy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs; William H. Watson, special commissioner; Thomas Murphy, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Kansas; and Henry W. Martin, United States Indian Agent, concluded a treaty with the Sac and Fox tribes of Mississippi which contained the following provisions: cession to the United States of all the lands and improvements contained in their portion of the reserve defined in the treaty of 1859; cession of the land remaining unsold in that portion of the reservation provided by Article 4 of that treaty, to be sold for their benefit; payment to the Indians of one dollar per acre for these lands (157,000 acres) and payment of the outstanding in-

³¹Kappler, op. cit., pp. 910-50.

debtedness of the tribe out of the proceeds of the sale of these lands, deducting, however, sums to be spent for removal, subsistence, and establishment of the Indians in their new country; a grant to the Sacs and Foxes for their future home of a tract of land south of the Cherokee lands in the Indian Territory not to exceed 750 square miles, the new reservation to be selected by a group of commissioners appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and surveyed by the United States government; the fixing of a removal date; the building and maintenance by the tribe of a school and the maintenance of a tribal government; the payment by the government of \$16,400 to the Sacs and Foxes for cattle stealing, and the investigation of other Indian claims; and the grant to Indians entitled to land under the treaty of 1859 and whose selections had been made and approved of title to the land selected. The treaty further stipulated that the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri were to be allowed if they so desired and agreed to pay certain sums of money to unite with the Sacs and Foxes, and it was decided also that in order to bring the tribes together, no funds should be paid to Sacs and Foxes not residing on the new reservation or in the State of Iowa. Money due the Indians should be paid them on their reservation in Kansas until their removal, and then at the new agency.³²

³²Kappler, op. cit., pp. 951-6.

In 1869 representatives of the Sacs and Foxes journeyed into Indian Territory to select their new home. After mature deliberation upon their return to Kansas, they decided to locate west of the Creeks instead of in Cherokee country in order to be farther removed from the encroaching whites. As their agent expressed this thought, "they would be where white men would not come for a long time."³⁵

In November of that year the removal of the Sacs and Foxes was begun. It took forty wagons in all to move them, twenty-three going on before the main body with farm equipment, provisions, and other supplies. After nineteen days the main group arrived at their new reservation and there set up tents to spend the winter. Many of the children had been left behind to attend school and so as not to incur the hardships of that first winter. Also, a great number of the tribe had gone out into the plains, as was their usual custom, to hunt; these, however, promised to join the group in Indian Territory by spring. Nevertheless, one band of some two hundred and forty Sacs and Foxes led by Mokohoko declined to move and steadfastly remained in Kansas living a nomadic existence, despite being

³⁵Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869,
pp. 362-3.

cut off from the tribal annuities.⁵⁴

(The main body of the tribes settled down in the lower part of what is now Payne County) and the area immediately beneath it, that is, in the area between the Cimarron river and the North Fork of the Canadian. (They had ceased their wanderings and were here to begin a new phase of their existence)

⁵⁴Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1870,
pp. 269-71.

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Chapter III. The Sacs and Foxes in Indian
Territory Until the Opening of Their
Reservation to Settlement

(Life in the new reservation went on at first much as in the old.) The majority of the tribesmen continued to wear blankets rather than white men's clothes and to live in bark huts rather than in log houses. (They cleared a little ground and made some improvements on the land but still did not engage extensively in agricultural pursuits.) There was in the first years of their removal a boundary dispute with the Creeks, and the Sacs and Foxes did not feel like working their land until the dispute was settled.¹

John Hardy, their Indian agent, made the following report of them to his chief in August, 1872:

The Sac and Fox at the time of my last report were in a very unsettled condition occasioned as was then mentioned by the running of the line between this and the Creek Nation; the line was run some seven or eight miles west of the former line, cutting off many of the best improvements of the Sac and Foxes. It rendered them very unhappy for a time . . . they selected new lands. . . . Some of them have put up farm houses. . . . There has been great improvement among those Indians since last report, in regard to men imposing heavy burdens upon their women to carry. They now pack on horses

¹Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871,
pp. 493-4.

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and use wagons; and the women are more clean and decent in appearance. . . . We have been visited with an unusual amount of sickness during the past year and one of every ten Indians has died. . . . They now number 160 males, 147 females, and 126 children, total 433. . . . In consequence of a drought, they raised but little last year.²

Despite the invitation in the Treaty of 1867 to all Sacs and Foxes in residence elsewhere to join those in Indian Territory, those of the tribes outside the Territory continued to remain outside. The remnant in Nebraska wanted to accept the invitation but could not make arrangements to sell their land. The tribesmen in Iowa, now receiving annuities, were prospering, increasing their holdings both in land and livestock, and they wanted to remain where they were. This group was growing in population, while all the other groups, including the Kansas and Indian Territory groups, who in 1874 totalled seven hundred, were on a decline.³ Finally, the band still in Kansas, although reduced to beggary, persisted in their refusal to remove to the new reservation. At one time indeed they were brought to Indian Territory but left as soon as they could.

While their progress was not so rapid as the government desired, the moving of the Sac and Fox tribes to the

²Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, pp. 244-5.

³Ibid., 1874, pp. 230-2.

Indian Territory did prove to have some civilizing effects upon them, judging from the following report of their agent, August 31, 1876:

In compliance with instructions from the Indian Department, I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of this agency; the condition of the Sac and Fox Indians now on the reservation, numbering 417, may be considered good, as they have grown excellent crops and cultivated probably a larger area than ever before. They are abundantly supplied with ponies and hogs, but comparatively few of them have cattle. The Indians are so entirely subject to and governed by the time-honored and traditional opinions of education and religion that, while they are entirely tractable to any requirements coming from the authority of the Indian Bureau, still it is with great reluctance that they submit to these innovations of civilization and Christianization; and while the old and educated permit these infractions upon their peculiar dogmas, still they will resist it to a persecution when coming from those over whom they have control as has recently been demonstrated by the tribe in refusing some of the more enlightened and religiously inclined members of the (Baptist) Church to build a house of worship; and to have these principles so instilled, as for the Indians to take hold of, or adopt them voluntarily, must come through the educating, enlightening, and training of the children. The Manual-Labor-School has been in session regularly with the exception of a few days, with an average attendance of 29½ and the progress has been commendable. . . . Sabbath School and meeting for worship have been regularly kept up during the summer with manifest interest by the school children and employes, but few of the "Blanket" Indians attending regularly.⁴

A major hindrance to the development and civilization, not only of the Sac and Fox band in Indian Territory but

⁴Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876,
pp. 74-5.

to those as well in Nebraska and Iowa, was their large annuities. Note the following report on this theme by William Nicholson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Lawrence, Kansas, September 22, 1876, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

The Sac and Fox of the Mississippi (those in the Indian Territory), having a large moneyed annuity, are under little necessity to make exertions for their support and for that reason are doing less in farming and other industries than might otherwise be expected. They are thus able to keep up to a considerable extent the old Indian habits; and those habits in turn keep them under the influence of superstitious notions. Under treaty arrangement an industrial boarding school is maintained from the funds of the tribe, and nearly one-half of their children are receiving its benefits. The influence of this is very perceptible upon many of the adult Indians notwithstanding the neutralizing effect of the large annuity.⁵

Two years later Levi Woodward of the Sac and Fox agency, which now embraced the Sacs and Foxes of Mississippi in Indian Territory, the Absentee-Shawnees, the Mexican Kickapoos, and the Citizen Pottawatomies, reported the number of Sacs and Foxes permanently residing on the reservation at 433, most of whom engaged more or less in agricultural pursuits and stock raising, corn being the principal cereal product. He said that their increased demand for houses and agricultural implements and the additional area of cultivated land brought into

⁵Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876,
p. 71.

use indicated a steady advance in civilization. Many of the Indians put up hay for the feeding of their stock during the winter and were beginning to realize the necessity as well as the advantage of a change in their mode of living.

The report speaks of the portion of the tribe in Iowa, who had been so far recognized as a separate tribe as to have been provided with an agent and part of the Sac and Fox funds, an action of "doubtful propriety," encouraging the refusal to occupy lands set apart for them in Indian Territory, although they kept up their social relationships by protracted visits to Indian Territory from year to year. The agent thought that the Mokohoko band in Kansas would, by the favor shown those in Iowa, come to believe that if they would persist in their refusal to unite with the tribe they would eventually be recognized as being entitled to a portion of the Sac and Fox annuity fund and get it set apart for them. And, he says,

while the tribe desires a liberal policy extended to all the absentees to induce them to return and unite with their people, they provided by treaty that no part of their funds, due or to become due, should be paid to any bands or parts of bands who did not permanently reside with the tribe in the Indian Territory, but are required to go there and receive their money, as all the money was to be paid to them at the agency on the reservation and by thus being required to come to the agency from time to time to receive their annuity these roving

bands would eventually be induced to remain and unite with the tribe.

The Sacs and Foxes maintained their children in school that year, and many of the pupils who had never attended school before made progress in learning the English language. All the pupils large enough were instructed in and required to participate in all the domestic industries pertaining to the institution.⁶

Life continued on the agency as usual, with little to disturb the tranquility other than the usual difficulties all agents were compelled to encounter in the administration of affairs. By 1831 the Sac and Fox Indians on the reservation were 440 in number. Many of them had considerable land under cultivation and were planting more than at any time since they had removed to Indian Territory. The agent, however, felt they would do much more constructive agricultural work if it were not for their annuities.

Having a large annuity in money paid them semi-annually, they are not compelled to labor for support as other tribes. I am fully convinced that cash annuities paid any Indian tribe is detrimental to their best interest, and has a tendency to make them indifferent and indolent; many of them living or endeavoring to live on their annuity alone, independent of any labor if possible. Were it not for the cash annuity paid to the Sac and Fox tribe, they would soon become good industrious farmers and stock raisers.

⁶Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1878,
pp. 68-70.

He reported that the parents of the children who attended school took great interest in the progress of their children and made frequent visits to the school, expressing themselves as well pleased and determined to have their children continue in school. He says also,

I have myself and some of the most influential men of the tribe frequently talked to the Indians in regard to their duty to their children in the matter of education; and I think that many of them are now more than ever favorably inclined in that direction.⁷

The agent the succeeding year reported that the school had been kept up and that the average attendance was about 23 pupils. He felt that much interest had been manifested and that the prospects for the succeeding year were good. During the summer of 1882 there was quite a bit of illness, both among the tribe and among the government employes.⁸

By 1883 almost all of the Indians, now 437 in number, had small fields under fence, and a few of them had good farms, with large herds of ponies and horses, which they acquired and hoarded as misers do gold. Nearly all of them had a few hogs and did more extensive planting than ever before.

⁷Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1881, pp. 100-2.

⁸Ibid., 1882, pp. 86-7.

Many of them have potatoes to sell instead of buying, as has usually been the case with them. Having made a very poor winter's hunt last winter, they seem to have realized the necessity of raising something to subsist upon, as they can no longer depend upon the chase.

The agent also reported that the Indian school had been kept up ten and one-half months of the year, with an average attendance of "28 6/10 scholars per day."⁹

Three years later there was a small decrease in population but a relatively great material increase. During the year fifteen new dwelling houses were constructed, many new fences were built, and quite a number of wells were dug. The Indians were beginning to turn to a more profitable kind of livestock, for they now had 3,990 cattle and 876 hogs as against only 670 horses. They had adopted new laws for the tribe and put them in practical operation, had set up courts in which they tried offenders for minor offenses, and rendered decisions which met with the acquiescence and approval of the majority of the Indians. Chief Keokuk, son of old Chief Keokuk and much like him, but finer and more intelligent, bitterly opposed the adoption of laws at first but later strongly favored them and aided materially in their support. Keokuk was a model of industry and energy for his tribe, for though over seventy years of age, he cultivated in a thorough manner during the

⁹Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1883,
pp. 84-7.

summer of 1886 over twenty acres of corn and in anticipation of a large crop built two corn cribs for its storage.¹⁰

In 1887 the Sac and Fox Indians on the reservation numbered 528, for the Mokohoko band was removed from Kansas that year to the reservation and enrolled preparatory to the payment of annuities. By this time 15 per cent of the entire group on the reservation had come to accept civilized apparel and log-cabin homes, but the rest continued wholly or partly to be blanket Indians. The agent recommended the introduction of games and dancing "to divert their minds from the war dance and other amusements of the aborigines."¹¹

The report the following year was very hopeful. The agent said that 10 per cent of the Indians could speak English sufficiently to transact ordinary business. The attendance at school was much larger than ever before, the average daily attendance being 51, 20 above the previous year. Besides this number, there were about 50 Indian children from the agency attending school in the states.¹²

Two years later, on the eve of the allotment of lands to the Sacs and Foxes, Agent Samuel Lee Patrick reported

¹⁰Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1886, pp. 142-5.

¹¹Ibid., 1887, pp. 94-7.

¹²Ibid., 1888, pp. 110-13.

as follows:

Commendable progress is being made in this tribe by making improvements on land selected as permanent homes with a view of taking allotments. There is also a noticeable improvement in the social condition of this tribe, brought about in a measure by the adoption of some wholesome laws by the Sac and Fox National Council, such as requiring a lawful marriage ceremony, prohibiting polygamy, and making other social restrictions. Morally this tribe is perhaps above the average, and petty theft usually prevalent among many other tribes is usually unknown to them. . . . The Sac and Fox school located at the agency is supported in part by the tribal funds, there being set apart annually \$5,000 by a treaty for that purpose. . . . The average daily attendance for the past year was 40. . . . It is reasonable to believe that with the progress of civilization that the Christian and moral tone of the Indians of this agency is gradually improving.¹³

¹³Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1890,
pp. 199-203.

Chapter IV. The Opening of the Sac
and Fox Reservation

Early in the second quarter of the nineteenth century Congress passed an act which made provision for establishing an Indian Territory.¹ Shortly thereafter the government assigned all the central Indian Territory to the Creek Nation and later gave them a patent to the same. The Creeks were a few years later moved into about the eastern half of their reservation, and the government divided the western portion among the Sacs and Foxes, the Iowas, the Pottawatomies, the Seminoles, and the Kickapoos.

After the exodus of the Creeks, the Sacs and Foxes moved into their new reservation in the Indian Territory. This new land was turned over to the Indians for a permanent home where they would not be molested by the white men and could live their natural lives. It was not long, however, until the whites began again to encroach on their territory. In 1889 the unassigned lands were opened to white settlement,² and presently the eyes of the whites were cast upon the land of the Sacs and Foxes. This same

¹4 Stat., pp. 411-12.

²25 Stat., pp. 757-9.

year a bill was approved providing for the appointment by the President of a commission known as the Cherokee Commission, whose duty it was to negotiate with the Cherokee and other tribes, including the Sac and Fox, concerning their accepting allotments and opening up their surplus lands to white settlement.³

David H. Jerome, Alfred M. Wilson, and Warren G. Sayre were appointed on the commission to meet with Chiefs Mahkosahtoe and Moses Keokuk as representatives of the Sac and Fox tribes. On June 12, 1890, an agreement was reached between the commission and the Indian representatives in which the Indians ceded all of their land in Indian Territory with the exception of one and one-quarter sections for agency, school, and school farm use. It was, however, agreed that each Indian should take an allotment of 160 acres, of which the United States would hold in trust 80 acres for twenty-five years and 80 acres for five years for the sole benefit of the allottee or his heirs. For all land left, the United States government agreed to pay the Sac and Fox Indians \$485,000, of which \$300,000 should be placed in a trust fund in the United States Treasury and should bear interest at 5 per cent, the interest to be paid to the tribe in March of each year. Five thousand

³25 Stat., pp. 1005-6.

dollars should be handed to the Indian agent, and the balance should be divided among the Indians. Money due to a minor should be paid when he became of age.

The commission also agreed to send into the Sac and Fox country a competent corps of allotting agents and surveyors, who were to notify the chief of the tribe when their work was completed. Each Indian then would be free to choose an allotment; if he did not do so, the Indian agent should choose one for him. It was understood that after all allotments had been made the residue of the country should become public land and, under such restrictions as were to be imposed, be subject to white settlement. Furthermore, it was decided that if an Indian had already improved a piece of land, he should be given first choice of it for an allotment.⁴

The agreement between the United States and the Sac and Fox Indians was approved by Congress February 13, 1891. The same act also provided for the opening of the lands belonging to the Iowas, whose lands adjoined those of the Sac and Fox Nation and with whom the Cherokee Commission also had treated.⁵

The agent reported in 1891:

⁴26 Stat., pp. 749-53.

⁵Ibid., pp. 753-59.

At the outset it is very gratifying to state the radical change being inaugurated in the way of settled occupations and industrial habits. Among the tribes who have taken their lands in severalty the doctrine is growing into an accepted belief that the day will soon be at hand when they must depend upon their own exertions and the products of the soil for a livelihood. That the disintegrating effects of contact with the homesteaders about to settle the reserve will destroy the remnant of tribal customs and semicivilized practices, the enlightened head men do not doubt. They confront the fact that they are soon to be placed upon an equal footing with the whites, with a fair field and no further favors.⁶

One hundred thirty-two thousand dollars of the \$185,000 due them under the agreement was paid to the Indians in 1891. This was a far larger amount than any of them had ever had before, and many were at a loss as to what to do with it. Some squandered part of their portions, of course, but the majority very sensibly bought livestock and farm implements.⁷

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Carson, who worked at the Sac and Fox agency, witnessed this payment of land money to the Indians. They say that never before or since has there been such a crowd or so much excitement at the agency. There were present, besides Sacs and Foxes, Euchies, Seminoles, Kickapoos, Pottawatomies, Chippewas, and Iowas, in addition to the officials from Washington and a

⁶Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1891, I, 360.

⁷Ibid., p. 361.

number of soldiers. Although gamblers, sharpers, and whiskey peddlers were there, the government kept remarkable order.

The agent reported that most of the Sacs and Foxes had readily taken to the idea of allotments. The Kansas Sacs (in Indian Territory), about one-fourth of the tribe, strongly objected to the plan, so they concluded to select adjacent allotments and continue to dwell as a group. The work of allotment was completed July 15, 1891, ten days before the final date fixed by treaty.⁸ Some 87,000 acres of land were allotted; 390,000 acres were restored to the public domain; and 800 acres were reserved for agency and Indian school purposes.⁹

Before the date set for the actual opening, September 22, 1891, the Indians were required to move off the land designated for settlement. The ranchers who had been leasing land from the Indians had to break up their ranches and dispose of large numbers of cattle. The largest and most famous of the ranches on the Sac and Fox reservation was the Turkey Track ranch;¹⁰ this ranch at one time had sixty thousand head of cattle. Two Sac and

⁸Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1891, I, 362-3.

⁹Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰Reminiscences of John Smith, cowboy.

Fox Indians, John Whistler and Moses Keokuk, each had a ranch eighteen miles square. A Mr. Hodson also had a small ranch where the Indians kept their ponies.¹¹

The lands of the Iowas, the Sacs and Foxes, the Pottawatomies, and the Absentee-Shawnees, lying east of the unassigned or Oklahoma lands which had been opened in 1889, aggregated 868,414 acres. From these lands it was determined to make additions to the east side of Cleveland, Logan, and Oklahoma counties; also, there was added to Payne County that part of it which lies southeast of the Cimarron river. The balance of these reservations was divided into two counties designated by the Presidential proclamation as Counties "A" and "B."¹²

By a proclamation issued by President Harrison September 18, 1891, the date set for the opening of the several reservations including what is now Lincoln and Pottawatomie and parts of Payne, Logan, Oklahoma, and Cleveland counties was 12 o'clock noon, September 22, 1891.

¹¹Reminiscences of William Barber, old settler.

¹²Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel Wright, Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1929), II, 475. In the first election the people selected names for the two counties by popular vote. The people of County "B" voted to call it Pottawatomie, but in County "A" a political issue was made of the name. The Republicans selected the name Lincoln, the Democrats the name Sac and Fox, and the Populists the name of their presidential nominee, Weaver. As the Republicans were in the majority, however, the county was called Lincoln.

According to the proclamation, the country was to be opened by a "run"; that is, at a given signal all those seeking claims were to start from the boundary line by any mode of travel the individual might choose by which to reach the coveted goal and drive a stake on the claim of his choice.

No sooner was President Harrison's proclamation issued than hundreds of people began to make plans for securing a home in the new land and to line the borders of the reservations.¹³ These would-be settlers were from practically every state in the Union, from North, South, East, and West. They were from the cities and from the rural sections. They were people from every class and condition of life; they were laborers, mechanics, farmers, and professional men. The sharper, the gambler, and the adventurer were present.

In each opening in Oklahoma in which the run method was used, the government officials in charge had to deal with a class of people known as the Sooners, those who ventured in too soon, and the Sac and Fox opening was no exception. The government took every precaution to outwit the Sooners, but as this was one of the last openings, the Sooners knew all the tricks by which to trick the

¹³Reminiscences of David Knight, old settler.

government. Many of them slipped in and scouted the country, choosing the best claims.¹⁴

As the day for opening drew near hundreds of people were camped on all sides of the Sac and Fox country. Since the country was a wilderness, there were no roads, wells, stores, hotels, or cities, and this fact added to the hardships. When the day arrived thousands of people were ready for the run; they were lined up on the borders of the land of promise, filled with the "Boomer" spirit typical of Oklahoma.¹⁵ There was little disorder; people generally were friendly, visiting with each other, laughing, exchanging jokes, and relating experiences. They had drawn up to the line every conceivable type of conveyance to use in making the race.

The hour approached twelve; everything was arranged, everyone was ready, and everybody was tense, so tense, in fact, that on a couple of fronts there were fist fights and one or two instances of gun play.¹⁶ At exactly noon the official signal, the crack of a gun, was given. The line was off, everyone striving for the lead. Some were injured in the confusion at the beginning of the race.

¹⁴Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1891, I, 360-1; reminiscences of Jim Murphy, old settler and peace officer.

¹⁵Reminiscences of Mr. Guinn, cowboy and lawyer.

¹⁶J. A. Penn, "Memoirs," Daily Oklahoman, April 22, 1909.

The faster ones soon took the lead, and rapidly they spread out in many directions. "Pell-mell, helter-skelter" everyone rode at break-neck speed, attempting to stake a claim for himself, to secure a home for his family.

The morning of the twenty-second had found the Sac and Fox country largely what it had always been, a great wilderness. The sinking sun in the West that day, however, shed its light upon a changed scene. The country everywhere was dotted with home-makers, most of whom were wide awake that evening and on the alert, jealously guarding their land lest others slip in to jeopardize their claims.

With reference to the jumping of claims, the story of Bill Freshour is typical. Soon after the run Freshour noticed a covered wagon had moved in on the north end of his claim, Freshour having put up his tent in the southwest corner. He immediately went over to see the newcomer, who informed Freshour he was going to contest the claim. Freshour told him in no uncertain terms to move and gave him three hours to get started. Freshour went back to his tent, waited the three hours, but saw no move being made. He brought his rifle from the tent and carefully took three shots at the top of the covered wagon. There was immediately plenty of action, and the wagon was soon moving up the road.¹⁷

¹⁷Reminiscences of Bill Freshour, old settler. Freshour later became an effective peace officer.

The second day was a busy one for the settlers, who pitched tents, selected building sites, and if possible plowed a few furrows to show signs of establishment. Another very necessary task was to locate the closest creek or spring, from which to secure water. At the close of the day the virgin soil was everywhere broken, and a thousand peaceful campfires sent up their blue smoke to the heavens.

There were a few white families who had been traders or who were related to traders who lived in the Indian country. Two of these families, living near the Sac and Fox agency, had loaded into their wagons the evening before the opening and driven to the line, where they joined the multitudes seeking homes. At the given signal the next day they raced back to their homes. In a contest over these claims the courts held that these individuals had complied with the rules and that their claims were legal.¹⁸

Just as interesting, perhaps, as the struggle for farm lands was the race for town lots in the two county seat towns. Chandler and Tecumseh had been surveyed and platted by government officials, and the run for lots created unusual excitement. There were some five thousand

¹⁸Reminiscences of Leo Whistler, old Sac and Fox Indian.

people at each site to scramble madly for the twenty-four hundred lots in either town.¹⁹

At 12 o'clock noon Governor Steele rode his horse to the center of what was to be the City of Tecumseh, and as a signal to start the run he waved a white muffler, the same which he had used in a former opening. There was much action in the rush; twenty-four hundred souls were successful, while a like number were disappointed. A similar scene took place in Chandler.²⁰ On this day food and water were so scarce that a sandwich was thought a good meal, and water was five cents a glass.²¹ Two fine towns were built within a day, towns built entirely of tents, which, however, rapidly gave way to permanent structures.

In a few weeks many settlers boasted crude shanties of logs or rough lumber. In three months there had been built a few very good one- and two-room frame houses of finished lumber hauled from Guthrie.²²

Indicative of the life of the settlers is that of J. W. Pinkston and three grown sons, Otis, Paris, and

¹⁹Penn, op. cit.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Reminiscences of David Knight.

²²Reminiscences of Andrew Bowers, old settler, who built a one-room house which is still standing.

Russell, who took four claims near each other, about seven miles northeast of Stroud. They had to go to Guthrie sixty-five miles through the wilderness to buy groceries and lumber to build a house, a trip usually taking a week. Shawnee and Sapulpa were each forty-five miles away, but the roads were so bad it was nearly impossible to make the trip. Their food consisted mostly of corn and wild meats, such as deer, turkey, and prairie chicken. Their furniture was home-made, the beds being made by driving a post in the clay floor, running two poles at right angles from it to the walls, and then laying poles across them. Prairie grass placed in ticks and laid on the poles completed the bed.²³

In the late fall after the opening there came a prairie fire out of the Creek Nation and burned the country over for miles around. There was much excitement in fighting fire and building back-fires. The next morning the settlers looked out upon a world that was black as far as the eye could see. Many suffered severe losses.²⁴ For many years thereafter the pioneers had to guard against prairie fires, especially from the Creek Nation.

Most of the early settlers were very uneasy at times

²³Reminiscences of Paris Pinkston.

²⁴Reminiscences of Andrew Bowers.

because of the outlaws, who at certain periods engaged in train robbing, murdering, horse stealing, whiskey selling, and raids on Indian or white settlements. Four well-organized bands of outlaws, besides the many tough characters who played lone hands, operated in the Sac and Fox country at different times. Besides stealing horses, cattle, or saddles, the outlaws often would try to run young or timid settlers off their homesteads in order to file on these claims.²⁵ Billy Burford, who made the run, says that these people at several times threatened his life, but he refused to leave. Finally one night, he says,

a traveler came to my house and begged lodging for the night. I granted him this hospitality and during the night he made an attempt on my life, but I had become suspicious of him and was prepared for the attack, and when he slipped into my room I had him covered with my gun. I permitted him to leave but let him know what might happen if he should ever attempt it again, which he very cautiously heeded.²⁶

The settlers soon organized the Anti-Horse Thief Association for protection and to break up the outlaw rings.²⁷ A few of the charter members of the A.H.T.A. were Ward Lykan (president), W. B. Rigney, W. H. Hicks, Charles Cook, Cal Brown, Dick Barber, Owen Snook, T. B.

²⁵Reminiscences of David Knight.

²⁶Reminiscences of Billy Burford, old settler.

²⁷Reminiscences of W. B. Rigney, who made the run at the age of 18 with his father and was for years a peace officer.

Rigney, and David Knight.²⁸

At first there was no organized government except that of deputy United States marshalls. Bill Tilghman was appointed the first sheriff; he was a fine marksman and was a great aid to the A.H.T.A.²⁹ Under him for four years as a deputy sheriff was Jim Murphy of Fallis, who on three different occasions captured desperate outlaws single-handed.³⁰

About four years before the opening of the Sac and Fox reservation, the ranchmen had united and placed a row of large wooden posts running north and south about a mile apart along the western boundary of the Creek Nation, which was a mile and a half east of Stroud. The posts marked the danger line for any outlaw seen on the west side of it. This unwritten law continued in effect against all marauders for several years after the homeseekers settled in the reservation, for the Creek country at that time still was a wilderness.³¹

Despite the post line, a great number of bootleggers, horse thieves, cattle rustlers, and other outlaws slipped

²⁸Reminiscences of W. H. Hicks, old settler.

²⁹Reminiscences of W. B. Rigney.

³⁰Reminiscences of Jim Murphy.

³¹G. Y. Walbright, writing in the Stroud (Oklahoma) Messenger, January 18, 1935.

out of the Creek Nation into the west to commit their crimes, the most common of which was selling whiskey to the Indians.³² Many forays were made by night across this line. A man with a good saddle horse was always uneasy lest he awake in the morning to find his horse gone, perhaps to find a worn-out "plug" left in its place. Many a white settler spent days riding in the Creek Nation hunting for his horse. But seldom were the horses recovered, for the thieves were well organized.³³

The post line soon came to divide two vastly different regions. West of the line the white men had killed out most of the game. East of the line was still being found plenty of deer, razorback hogs, wild turkey, quail, and prairie chicken. It was against the law for white men to hunt in the Creek Nation, but the temptation was too great for some of the early settlers, and many a piece of meat found its way across the line to the tables of the pioneers.

There were few farmers who had enough machinery to get along, so many of them had to borrow. People were neighborly and willing to lend. Times were hard but not necessarily sad. There were young people here and there throughout the country, and they had many really enjoyable

³²Reminiscences of John Smith.

³³Reminiscences of David Knight. Mr. Knight had this experience.

times. There were literary societies, box suppers, Sunday School, church socials, and community singing at the old Stroud schoolhouse.³⁴

Living in one-room houses did not prevent the settlers from being hospitable. Occasionally one family visiting another was prevented from returning home at night; when this happened the visitors were heartily welcomed to spend the night. Near bedtime the men and boys would slip outdoors while the ladies and girls retired, the last one dressed for bed blowing out the light. Then the men came in to bed. The next morning before daylight the men were out "doing up the chores." The children received most pleasure from such occasions.

The whites and Sacs and Foxes got along very amicably, although at first some of the whites were afraid of the Indians. They quickly came to accept each other, however, and to look upon each other with considerable interest. Henry Lippert, who lived on the trail from the Indian village to the agency, relates with pleasure how near the day on which the annuity was to be paid the Indians would load all their belongings into wagons, desert their village, and drive, one after the other, south to the agency. The old buck would sit on the spring seat, while the squaw, her papoose, and a pig or two would sit in the wagon box.

³⁴G. Y. Walbright, op. cit., November 15, 1935.

They would have an extra horse and a cow or two following them. Sometimes they would stop at Old Stroud store to trade and would turn the pigs loose to eat while they traded. When ready to go, they called the pigs and traveled on.³⁵

Although the Mokohoko band and others sought to evade the intent of the allotment law, the majority of the Sacs and Foxes settled down on their lands with the purpose, at least, of improving their allotments. Like all other people, however, they differed in habit and inclination; many of them were lazy, and though they talked much, they did little. Others were thrifty and industrious, improved and cultivated their lands, and gave every evidence of being very worthwhile citizens. Especially forward-looking was the younger generation of Indians, who in school had worked under the supervision of industrial teachers. On the whole, said the agent in his report the year following the opening, it is

too soon to really determine the practical effect the allotment laws will have, but it is sufficiently evident that it will be beneficial to the Indians under jurisdiction of this agency.³⁶

Later reports have borne out this prediction.

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³⁵Reminiscences of Henry Lippert, old settler.

³⁶Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1892, p. 403.

(The Sac and Fox Indians at the time of their discovery by the whites were fierce aborigines who from time to time almost exterminated or were exterminated by their Indian neighbors. They early formed a dislike for the French explorers and traders and warred against them incessantly)

(At first they were disposed to be friendly toward the new United States government, but the Treaty of St. Louis in 1804 and successive treaties aroused a hatred that culminated in the Black Hawk conflict of 1832. After their defeat, they were moved from place to place by successive treaties, but after settling down each time, they shortly would find white settlers clamoring for their lands)

(Their last move was into the Indian Territory, where for a period of twenty years they had comparative peace and under the guidance of Indian agents began adopting civilized ways. This was well, for in 1891 when they found it expedient to take allotments and turn over most of their old reservation to white settlement, they had reached a point of civilization enabling them to give up their old mode of living and adopt that of the whites)

The acceptance by the Sacs and Foxes of civilized life was inevitable. They were many times moved away from white culture and influence, but their white agents and many of their own leaders foresaw the day when there would be no wilderness left to remove to, a day when the Indians must necessarily accept the white mode of life.

These agents and leaders very wisely educated the tribe to a level from which in 1891 they began without too much difficulty to take a place beside the white men.

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