

Nuggets of History

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A BRONZE MARKER FOR CHIEF SHABBONA by Hazel M. Hyde

Prior to any adventure, a little research helps in understanding the event. This is particularly true when attending a ceremony concerned with Indian traditions. Confusion as to whether Chief Shabbona was an Ottawa or a Potawatomi sent me scurrying to my faithful WORLD BOOK. There I found the first clue. The Ottawa, Chippewa and Potawatomi belonged to the Algonquin language group of eastern forest tribes and were closely allied. These three tribes formed a confederacy known as "the three fires."

When I arrived in Morris, Illinois, the rain was coming down in gentle showers making wraps and umbrellas necessary. Along with five other representatives from Rockford Chapter DAR, we found the road leading to Evergreen Cemetery, then to Shabbona Trail, and at last to a huge boulder with the name of this great Indian chief, with dates of his birth and death b. 1775 d. 1858. It was the kind of large field stone I have usually called "a wolf stone", useful in marking the site of a burial, or even covering the spot itself, so as to prevent wild animals from uncovering it. With the gentle patter of the rain, the place was serene and peaceful. It was a very suitable spot for an Indian chief who counseled his tribe to pursue peace with the White Man.

After taking a picture in the rain, I retreated with others to a tool shed and office of Emerald Cemetery to await the arrival of the Mayor of Morris and other dignitaries. Since this Grave Marking was under the jurisdiction of the Illinois State Organization of DAR, the Illinois State Regent, Mrs. Donald Zimmerman; Mrs. Lyle Hinshaw, State Historian; and Mrs. William D. Hunt, State Chaplain, were among the State DAR Officers present. Boy Scouts were assembling. But walking about quietly was Chief Greenwood of the Cherokee Indians, here to do honor to a great chief. He told some of us he had intended to wait until the gathered crowd had departed and the bronze grave marker was in place to perform his own rites. He had been persuaded to cooperate with the other participants. Chief Greenwood told us he did not become a Chief by birth and inheritance, but was made a Chief by election. He is a friend of the grand-daughter of Chief Shabbona.

The biography given by Mrs. Lyle Hinshaw, the State DAR Historian, was so clear and concise that I secured a copy and it is quoted here. She used HISTORY OF GRUNDY COUNTY and INDIAN PLACE NAMES IN ILLINOIS as references.

CHIEF SHABBONA
by Joyce E. Hinshaw
Compiled by

Mrs. Carl O. Harmon, State Chairman of American Indians

State Historian, Illinois Organization
Daughters of the American Revolution

Chief Shabbona, who shares with Shakespeare the distinction of having his name spelled in an endless number of ways, was born of Ottawa parents, on the Kankakee River in Will County, about 1775. In his youth he married the daughter of a Potawatomie chief, who had his village on the Illinois River, a short distance above the mouth of the Fox River. At the death of his father-in-law he became Chief of this band of Indians. They settled in DeKalb County where he was discovered by the early settlers.

Shabbona lacked none of the qualities to be a good chief. He had the respect and confidence from his tribe, but he possessed a greater quality. He understood that War with the white settlers would be a hopeless situation. His only hope for his Indians was to make the best terms possible to live in peace. To this policy he was one of the first of his people to give support to the white settlers. Once committed to this line of action, he allowed no influence, however strong, to swerve him from his convictions.

While not gifted as an orator, his reputation for hones-



ty, fidelity to his nation, and his good judgment, gave him a wide influence among the warlike of his people. Shabbona rendered valuable service to the white settlers. He influenced the Potawatomi tribe to remain neutral during the Winnebago scare of 1827 and again during the Black Hawk War



Chief Greenwood of the Cherokee Indians, a friend of the granddaughter of Chief Shabbona, performed an ancient rite with his pipe.

of 1832. When he joined his son in Paul Revere-like night ride to warn the settlers of the impending attack.

After performing this valued service, he retired with his band at the close of the war to his village in DeKalb County, where they remained till his tribe headed west in 1836.

Shabbona was given a tract of land---1280 acres by the National Government for his services during the Indian Wars. Later this land, due to a slight interruption problem, was taken from him and his family. His legal case excited the interest of his early friends, who purchased a small tract of improved land, with a house and outbuildings. This land is located on the bank of the Illinois in Grundy County.

Here he lived in a wigwam--his family lived in the house --until his death at the age of 84.

General Cass once introduced Shabbona to a very distinguished audience in Washington, D.C.

"SHABBONA, THE GREATEST RED MAN OF THE WEST!

A TRUE FRIEND OF THE WHITE SETTLERS."

The prayer used by Mrs. Hunt, the State DAR Chaplain:

An Indian Prayer

Chief Yellow Lark from Seattle

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in
the winds, and whose breath gives life to all
the world, hear me.

I come before You, one of Your many
children, I am small and weak, I need Your
strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever
behold the red and purple sunset. Make my
hands respect the things You have made, my ears
sharp to hear Your voice.

Make me wise, so that I may know the things
You have taught my people, the lesson You have
hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength not to be superior to my
brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest
enemy--myself.

Make me ever ready to come to You with clean
hands and straight eyes, so when life fades as
a fading sunset, my spirit may come to You
without shame.

In the early days, the Potawatomi lived near the eastern
end of Lake Superior. Their enemies had driven them away.
Later, they lived along the shores of Green Bay, Wisconsin.
Around Lake Michigan there were bands of Potawatomie. Also
at Grand Detour, the bend of Rock River, was a Potawatomie
Village. The tribe had a village in the Chicago region
after the Miami left there about 1700. These Indians
raised corn, made maple sugar, and hunted buffalo.

The Potawatomi were described as being more polite than
other tribes of the area. We know the story of Stephen
Mack living and trading among them before and after marry-
ing Chief Gah's daughter, Hononegah. They ceded their land
to the United States Government in the 1830s. They were
the last Indians, along with the Chippewa and Ottawa to
leave Illinois.

ROCKFORD JOURNAL, September 21, 1983, credited Mayor
John McNamara with proclaiming September 19-24 as Rock-
ford's American Indian and Eskimo Week. This would coin-
cide with National American Indian Day on September 23.
Rockford Chapter DAR is observing American Indian Customs
and Culture with a talk by Mrs. Harold B. Hyde: "The Winne-
bago Indians Respected Nature". Mrs. Hyde has been investi-
gating the history and life-style of the various Indian
tribes that have inhabited Illinois and Southern Wisconsin
when state lines did not exist.

There are substantial numbers of American Indians, ac-
cording to ROCKFORD JOURNAL, that live in the Metro Rock-
ford Area. Thirty-six of Rockford's public schools enroll
identified American Indians representing sixteen nations.



A reverent moment for Chief
Greenwood, as he pays honor
to the great Chief Shabbona



James R. Washburn, Mayor
of Morris, Illinois

The majority of the students represent the Cherokee,
Ojibwa, Chippewa, Navaho, Oneida and Apache Nations.

Smoking the pipe was an important activity for Indians.
No decision of peace or war, of personal business or tribal
affairs was conducted without a pipe smoking ceremony. The
Indians believed that a pipe put them in touch with the
spirit world. The use of the pipe was sacred. Pipes as
ceremonial objects were usually decorated with feathers,
fur, beads, or horse hair. The pipes were carved and a
good one was treasured for special occasions. The Indian
felt himself to be in touch with the earth and lived in
harmony with nature and himself. There are many levels of
understanding in this world of existence.

After the unveiling and dedication of the bronze grave
marker by Mrs. Zimmerman, the invocation using an Indian
prayer given by Mrs. Hunt, and Mrs. Hinshaw's biographical
account, Chief Greenwood stepped forward. He asked for
more space. His beaded bag in which the pipe had been
carried hung from his shoulder. In his pipe was a com-
bination of tobacco, bark of dogwood, and mountain mint and
you felt it was important that it be correct as it would
be an offering to the Great Spirit. He raised the pipe to
the four directions beginning, I believe, with the north,

then east, next west, and lastly south with chanted prayer-like words addressed to the Great Spirit. Before lifting the pipe he made a circular motion in the earth and at appropriate times he shook the rattle with the other hand and danced a few slow steps. It was all done most reverently and there was a feeling that it was a very ancient, a very sacred, and a very reverent rite.

The mayor of Morris, James R. Washburn, accepted the plaque, thanked all the participants and those who had attended. The Cherokee Indian Chief said that the rain was the tears of the Great Spirit for the departure of Chief Shabbona from the beautiful land of his tribe and their forefathers.

THEIRS WERE THE STREAMS AND THE PRAIRIES
by Hazel M. Hyde
(Continued from last issue)

A story in YANKEE Magazine, March 1983, entitled, "The Sugar Maples", may suggest the trial and error way in which the Indians discovered the tree with the finest and sweetest sap. Arturo Vivante tells this story:

"Spring came late and he had gone on a summer job in the forestry department, he struck with an ax a yellow birch, not with the idea of felling it, but just to set the ax in full view rather than on the ground where he might lose it, and the tree's sap gushed out abundantly, like blood from a deep wound, though colorless, and though the birch, of course made no lament. As the sap continued to pour out, he watched it in amazement, stilled by the sight, then pulled the ax out, and wished he could staunch the flow. The man he was with said that, like maple sap, it too was sweet and that syrup and sugar could be made from it though it took even more boiling down. Ever since then, from time to time he thought of the faraway tree that he had wounded, and the sap that he had spilled."

Perhaps the Indians had tried using the sap of other trees and had gradually developed the best way to use the hard maples.

The flavor-filled golden-brown maple syrup so prized by many comes from the sugary sap of the hard maple sometimes called rock maple or sugar maple. Its range is from Newfoundland to the Great Lakes, south to Georgia, west to Manitoba and Texas. This beautiful tree may reach a height of one hundred thirty-five feet with a trunk as large as five feet across. It has gray bark and dark-green leaves. It makes the early fall a blaze of glory with its yellow,

orange, and red leaves. Rockford, called Forest City, still has a number of fine specimen of maple trees that display these same colors. Perhaps they are not the sugar maples, but they do give a fine example of autumn color.

Trade among the tribes was frequent. For example, a Menominee family that was short of buffalo robes would paddle across Green Bay with a few sacks of wild rice and some baskets. They would spend a day or two with the Winnebagoes in agreeable bargaining. The surroundings would seem familiar because trading in summer was conducted out of doors. The long, airy summer lodges of the Winnebago were used primarily as shelters from rainy weather.

This next tale is very similar to one handed down in my own family about my itinerate great-great-great grandfather John Parker when he lived in Illinois.

The old Indian told the boy this story: Once while following some game with my father we passed through a grove of pines and started down towards a spring. Father stopped and pointed to a dead, lightning struck oak tree. Honey bees flew busily in and out of the hollow tree. The honey-filled combs could be seen from where he was standing. This was too much to pass up! I was sent back to get a pot for the honey. Father set to work with several moldering cattails near the hole. He explained that the smoke would have a calming effect on the bees. He cautioned that not all the honey should be taken or the bees would starve when winter came. They went to the hole and started taking the honey. The bees woke up and a cloud of the angry insects followed them down the hill. They submerged their bodies and heads in a stream of water. Even so the bees remained and they had a few bumps to recall the adventure and it was several hours before they could retrieve their honey in the pot.

The way the Winnebago tribe laid out its villages had significance. The tribe was divided into two groups, or moieties. One moiety was composed of clans named after birds, the other after land and water animals. Each moiety was further divided into clans. The Winnebago sky moiety included the Thunderbird, War, Eagle, and Pigeon clans; the earth moiety, the Bear, Wolf, Water-Spirit, Deer, Elk, Buffalo, Fish, and Snake Clans. The village tended to be laid out according to moiety and clan lines, half the village inhabited by sky moiety and half by earth by the earth moiety. Leadership of the sky moiety, by tradition, had come to reside in the Thunderbird clan; of the earth moiety, in the Bear Clan. The Thunderbirds were recognized as referees in arguments, and the chief of that clan was also chief of the village. The lodge of the Thunderbird Chief was a place of sanctuary. Marriage was governed by Moiety, Clan, and family relationships.

Five hundred years ago, says Signe Chell, there were no "noble savages", or as others pictured them, "blood-thirsty Redmen". They had a sophisticated conception of democracy in relation to one another and a basic understand-

ing of the relationship of man to nature, knowing how to live and adapt to the environment.

Private ownership of land was foreign to the Indians. To them the land and what it produced was for the benefit of all man, not just a single one. The protection and maintenance of balance in nature was vital. His way was to live from year to year, sharing with one another.

Many local stories of happenings here in Winnebago County linger in the memories of our older residents. John Mitchell's grandfather as a little boy went to the creek to play. He was wearing his usual clothing around the farm but he amazed his parents by returning dressed in Indian clothing.

Edith Jones knows many events related to her by her parents and others about local Indians.

A woman who lived where Blackhawk Park is located would bake pies and fresh bread. The Indians would come and ask for it. She was afraid and gave them all of the day's baking. But another woman at Corey's Bluff would grab her broom and chase the Indians away. An Indian respects bravery but will impose on those who show weakness and fear. This story is similar to the one my grandmother told to my father, only she shared some of her baking with her Indian callers and showed no fear, only friendliness.

John Birch of our locality told that Uncle John Frazier had a very bad sore on his leg that would not heal. He heard of an Indian who knew the use of many kinds of medicine. So he went to the Indian and after the Indian put something on the place and a short period of time passed, the Indian pulled out a ball-shaped material with little threads hanging. The leg healed and never troubled him any more.

Winnebago and Chippewa Indians gave some choice bits of travel information to Thatcher Blake and Germanicus Kent in the spring of 1834, according to Ash Johnson's notes in Volume I, Number 1 of NUGGETS OF HISTORY, November-December 1963, and that led to the founding of the city of Rockford.

Clement V. Burns gave the location of an Indian encampment (probably Winnebagos) as follows: At a point about one-half mile past the Trask Bridge is a spot just south of the highway where Burrirt, Pecatonica, Durand, and Harrison Townships Corner; and just west is the site of an early day race track, while across the highway in a grove of trees is the site of Indian encampments for several years after the tribes had migrated northward to Wisconsin but returned here to make medicine in the land of their fathers.

An article entitled "First Deed Entered on Record in Winnebago County" by Hazel M. Hyde, in NUGGETS OF HISTORY (Sept.-Oct., 1980, Vol. VII, No. 5) relates that Catherine Myott, a woman of the Winnebago Tribe, conveyed to Nicholas Bollvin her right to a section of land for the sum of eight hundred dollars. The land had been granted to her by the fifth article of the treaty concluded at Prairie du Chien in 1829 between the U.S. Government and

the Winnebago Nation of Indians.

Stephen Mack, the first white settler in Winnebago County, learned that the Rock River Valley afforded the best hunting grounds and that the Winnebago Indians were friendly with honest white men. Accordingly, he set out on an Indian pony. Mack rode into a camp near Janesville and learned of an Indian settlement farther south, below Turtle Creek (Beloit). The Indians there directed him to Bird's Grove, one-and-a-half miles west of the Pecatonica River mouth. He had planned to set up a trading center among the Winnebago Indians, but he lost the trail. Instead Mack followed Rock River to Grand Detour and launched his fur trade among the Pottawatomi tribe. Later he and his Indian wife, Ho-no-ne-gah, settled at Bird's Grove in 1828, now Macktown Forest Preserve.

Attorney L. C. Miller wrote: Mauh-Nah-Tee-See was an attractive and friendly Indian princess. She was of the Winnebago tribe which encamped, and roamed the prairies and woodlands in the Rock River and Wisconsin River valleys.

George Cornell, a religious news reporter, states scholars see a need for a deeper reverence for nature as manifested by Indian religion and face the damaging misuse of the environment.

To the Indian is a journey, and life is a journey. Their religious values were similar to these of the Central Algonquin tribes and not unlike those of the Dakota and Ponca who were of Siouan stock. The Winnebago's leading deity was known as Earth-Maker, and was similar to Gitchi Manito (Great Spirit), or more precisely "the mysterious and unknown powers of life that abound in the universe."

The American Indian, and certainly the Winnebago, still maintains his one basic, peculiarly native, philosophy of life, says Mrs. Chell, and with this we close:

I stand in good relation to the earth,
I stand in good relation to the gods,
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful,
I am alive.



South side of West State Street and east of Wyman Street in 1972



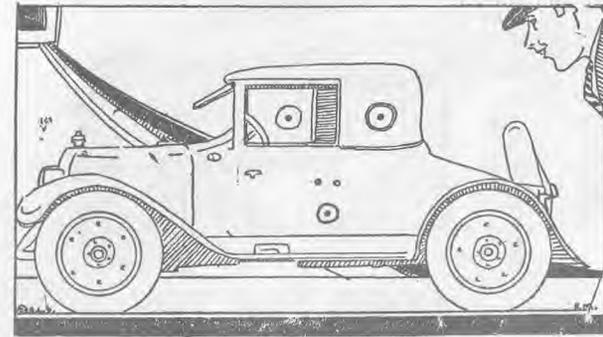
View of West State Street taken from the News Tower. Buildings on the south side of State Street had been razed, but the United Bank of Illinois had not yet been built. Luther Center now occupies land on the north side. Taken in 1974.



Also taken from the News Tower, this view shows the entire block now occupied by the United Bank of Illinois, as well as many other buildings now razed.

From the ROCKFORD REPUBLIC, November 28, 1924

It Happens Every Day



Thoughts Of A 1920 Coupe—

"The worst part about these separation proceedings — when your owner is trying to sell you — is that it always looks as though it was the car's fault. But my owner can't say I've ever given him any trouble in the year we've been together. I've done my best — and now he's tired of me.

"That's the way with these changeable men. They get crazy about a car and buy it — and then they see another one they like — and away they go. I heard at the time my owner bought me, he'd had three cars in the last three years. I might have known this would happen.

"This can't be a man to buy me — so soon! Why — I heard my owner say he'd just put an ad about me in today's Republic. They're talking terms, though — the new man says 'All right' — I'm sold! This is moving too fast for me!

"Well, I'm satisfied. I like this man first rate. He says he took a fancy to me as soon as he read the ad about me in The Republic's Automobile columns. I've taken a fancy to him, too. He doesn't look changeable — I bet we'll stick together for years."



**LOOK FOR THE
RED AND WHITE SIGN
At All Osborne Stations**

Advertisement of the Osborne Oil Company in the 1920s. In the early 1920s William and Thomas Osborne operated the W. J. Osborne Co. which sold Chevrolets and Stephen Salient automobiles. Later, Thomas ran the Osborne Furniture Co. at 317-319 West Jefferson Street, and the Osborne Oil Company had its offices at 2434 North Main Street. President was William J. Osborne, Eric S. Eckstrom was vice president, secretary was C. B. Joyce, and treasurer was E.R. Lawson. Its last year of operation was 1929.

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