

ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS AT GREEN BAY, IN 1816.

The following, attributed to *The Richmond (Va.) Enquirer*, appeared in *The (Winchester) Kentucky Advertiser* for November 9, 1816:

The following is an extract of a letter from Dr. William Henry Hening of this city, now regimental surgeon to the detachment of troops commanded by col. Miller, of the 3d regiment,¹ to his father, W. W. Hening, Esq. of this city, which contains some interesting information relative to the *Western Interests* of the United States— The observations are judicious, and we take much pleasure in submitting them to our readers.

The letter, too, enclose[s] the speech of a chief of the Winnebagoë tribe of Indians; marked with that peculiar vein of thought and expression, which distinguishes the *long talk* of the Indians.²

"CAMP ON FOX RIVER GREEN BAY August 29, 1816.

"In a letter which I addressed you previous to my leaving Mackinaw, you were informed of the route which I probably would pursue, in returning to Virginia. These anticipations seem thus far realized. In conformity to my ex-

¹ Col. John Miller, of the 3d U. S. Infantry, arrived at Green Bay in July, 1816, to take possession of the country upon the conclusion of the War of 1812-15. The manner of his coming is graphically related in Neville and Martin's *Historic Green Bay* (Milw., 1893), pp. 150-155. He built Fort Howard, named "in memory of General Benjamin Howard, U. S. A., who was in command of the western country during the early part of the war just concluded."—Ed.

² This is the speech alluded to in *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 154.—Ed.

pectations, early in July the detachment of riflemen stationed at Mackinaw, received orders to repair to Green Bay, and there establish a fort with all convenient expedition: to look down all expected opposition, from the Indians residing in this country. We sailed from Mackinaw on the 26th of July last, with the schooners Washington, Wayne, Mink, and sloop Amelia, having on board col. Miller, of the 3d regiment, col. Chambers¹ of the Rifle, major Gratiot,² of the engineers, a detachment of artillery under captain Pierce,³ and four companies of the 3d infantry, amounting in the whole to 500 men. We entered the mouth of the river on the 7th of Aug.; and, contrary to expectations, received from the French inhabitants and Indians a very friendly reception. Whether these professions were sincere, or proceeded from their fears, time will determine. After looking on for some days for a proper scite, the engineer has finally fixed on the position, where the old French fort (Le Bay) formerly stood. It will be a stockade with strong pickets, a bastion at each angle, with a piece of artillery on each, amply sufficient to beat off any Indian force that can be brought against it.— The garrison will consist of two companies of riflemen and two companies of infantry, all under the command of colonel Chambers. Some account of this very delightful country may prove not uninteresting. When the French first established themselves here, they found the contrast between it and Mackinaw very striking; for on leaving the latter place, vegetation was scarcely apparent; whereas, on arriving at the Bay, they found the woods & fields clothed in the most luxuriant verdure. At that time the country was inhabited by two tribes of Indians, the Winnebagoes, (called by the French 'Puons,' or stinking) and the Manomenies, (called 'Faulsavains,' or

¹ For sketch of Talbot Chambers, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xi., p. 393.—Ed.

² Charles Gratiot, Jr., son of the famous fur-trader, Charles Gratiot, who established posts on the Mississippi, during the Revolutionary War. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, x., pp. 289 *et seq.*—Ed.

³ John S. Pierce. See *ante*, p. 177, note 1.—Ed.

eaters of wild rice). The Winnebagoes, proving most troublesome, the French and Manomenies turned their arms against them, and having killed a number, drove them to the Winnebago Lake and the Rock river, where they have ever since resided. The soil on both sides of the river is very fine and the fine wheat fields and gardens give it every appearance of a rich and fertile country. The river abounds with fish, particularly a species of sturgeon, which exceeds that of James river,¹ in the richness and delicacy of its flavor, and in the spring and fall myriads of water fowl, attracted by the wild rice, darken the air. This plant springs up in water six or seven feet deep, so thick, as in many places to impede the progress of boats and canoes. The Indians call it Ma-no-men² and living almost entirely on it, they have received from the French the appellation of Paulsavains, or Wild Rice Eaters. When the head becomes ripe they pass through it with their canoes, and bending them over, strike them with small sticks, and in a very short time nearly fill their canoes with the grain. This, when cleaned, becomes an excellent article of diet, scarcely inferior to the rice of the south. Everything at present bears a peaceable aspect, but how long this state of things will continue is very uncertain. Without a great deal of circumspection on the part of the Indian department, and a chain of posts always properly garrisoned, I have little hesitation in saying, that our frontier again will witness the horrors of savage warfare.— The Winnebagoes, it is manifest, are decidedly opposed to our making any establishment in this country, as are also a part of the Paulsavains. Nothing, I believe, but the strong force they have to combat, keeps them quiet.—The storm is murmuring at a distance, which I am fearful will, sooner or later, burst on us with all the accumulated horrors of savage vengeance. To give you an idea of the present feelings of the Indians, I enclose a

¹ In Virginia.—Ed.

² See *ante*, p. 429.—Ed.

speech of Nat-aw-pin-daw-qua, or the Smoker, a Winnebago chief, delivered before colonel Boyer,¹ the Indian agent.

SPEECH

Of Nataawpindawqua Smoker, a Winnebago Chief, delivered at Green Bay, on the 23d of August, before col. Bowyer, the Indian agent.

Father—you fancy, father, that I am of a nation, who are in the habit of telling lies, because other tribes give us that character; but all I am going to say now shall be the truth.

Father—It is true that we have committed faults, but the white people are the cause of it. We red skins believe all that you say, and if your intentions are to attack us, we are not alone.

Father—When at Mackinaw, I there told you the general thought of the Indians, and that they were in dread of you. We are afraid that your intention in coming here, to build forts was with a view to do us harm.

Father—On your arrival here, we were much troubled, because, we were apprehensive you had come to injure the Red Skins, but we beg that you may take us under your wings.

Father—You know that the Master of Life governs us all. It is him who placed us on the earth and is our Master. Should your intentions be to destroy us, I doubt if you could succeed, because he *protects us as well as you*.

Father—The words that are issuing from my mouth are the words of truth. I am always seeking good.—When at Mackinaw we told you the opinions of the Red Skins. There are many words, my Father, that are repeated with false meaning. I beg you will not listen to those words.—I am desirous that the children of the same great Father should always be friends. Be charitable and listen to the words I am telling you. We hope that our father will conform to the promise he has made to us.

¹For sketch of Bowyer, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xl, p. 393, note 3.—ED.

Father—Believe not that if you should have any troubles with the Red Coats,¹ that any of us will mix in them. We first saw the French; they were our first Father; Next to them, came the Red Coats. Now, our determination is not to listen; and should you have any shock among you, we shall remain neutral.

Father—I tell you no lies—All the other nations think as we do, and it is my reason for repeating it now. You have doubts respecting your children the Red Skins. Why have you brought big guns along with you? Certainly it must have been with a view of using them against us. We hope that you will have no use for them, but we do not like to see them in the country.

Father—All that I am telling you is the truth. The French inhabitants residing in this country, who are acquainted with us, and who assist us in our wants, were you to drive them away from the lands they occupy, as well as those at the Prairie du Chien, you would indeed reduce us to charity. We are desirous that our Father would send these words to our great Father (the President) and we should be happy in soon hearing from him.

Father—Do not believe that I tell you any false words. When the French agent for Indian affairs resided among us, we were comparatively happy. He treated us with victuals, and clothed us. If I tell lies, the French inhabitants who are present, can contradict me.

Father—I conceive myself an object of pity, as are also the young men who accompany us. Your American agents have always cheated us—I will not believe that you (Col. Bowyer), will do the same. The English have also cheated us, and led us wrong. We are not, as other tribes, in the habit of incommoding our father at every moment. All that you have promised our chiefs, I hope you will perform, in order that they will inform their young men of the real character of their father.

Father—The master of life is above us, and who is our master? You see me almost naked, and because I am not

¹English troops.—Ed.

as well dressed as you are, you no doubt fancy me an object of pity.—It is him who has willed it so. He has put something in your heads, to give you more ideas and intelligence than we possess. But we wish to set off, and see what our father will do for us, that we may show it to the other nations, as we pass through them. The master of life is present—he listens to us. You know, my father, that he is on earth, in the Heavens; in fact, that he fills all matter. I hope that we are not here for the purpose of telling each other lies. You my father, can you, like us, bore your ears, and suspend bobs to them? Can you put bands of silver on your arms, or bedaub your faces as we do? No, you cannot; because the master of life would punish you were you to do it.—You see, every day, nations painted in different colors; he has ordered it so, to show the whites that we are objects of charity, and that they are to assist us.

Father—You see that I tell no lies. It is true that I am a fool. Our fathers received counsel from the French, then from the English, and finally from you Americans. We have abandoned the red coats because they cheated us,¹ and our eyes are now opened. We are to reside among you. It is true that they (the red coats), give us fine guns and goods; but we do not like their guns as well as your rifles. We hope that our father will supply us soon, and, as you have promised, you will cause our hoes and hatchets to be mended, that our wives may cultivate their fields without difficulty.

Father—You see me now speaking, and were I to continue for the whole day, or as it frequently happens in large councils, for three or four, you would still hear but the truth.—Your arms (rifles) please us. They shoot well, and with them we should be certain of making good hunts. If our father would furnish us with some of them, we should be able to obtain an easy subsistence for our wives and children, and a sufficiency of skins to exchange with the traders for goods, and occasionally bring our father a piece of fresh meat.

¹ Cf. "Bulger Papers," *ante*, *passim*.—Ed.

Father.—There are tribes of Indians who left this yesterday; you opened your breasts (barrels) and gave them your milk (whiskey). They had not gone far before they drank the whole. I am fearful that those people, after having drank their father's milk in that way, may carry bad words to their villages. It is true, our father promised us some, and if we get it, we will carry it to our villages, shew it to our young men and old men, that they may have a taste of it, and at the same time hear the words of their father. Under our French father, we lived well; afterwards, the English helped us profusely at first, in order to make us foolish. But, for the two or three years past, they do not give us one-third what they are indebted to us. What you have told us, proves true, and we hope you will not treat us as the English have done."