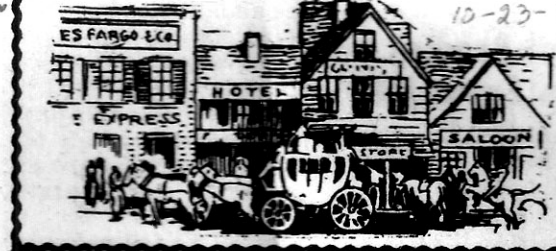


10-23-74

Pioneers Around

Delta, Ohio

Delta Atlas 10-23-1974
By Mrs. Vashti Seaman



INDIANS AND THE FUR TRADERS

The Maumee River Valley was populated by remnants of the once powerful tribe of the OTTAWAS. For years they had many villages along the Maumee River banks, where they fished during the seasons and supplied fresh fish for the Indian Mission of Rev. VanTassel. But, as the white traders became more numerous, the Chiefs and their villages were moved further into what is now Fulton Co., as whiskey was not good for their young braves.

O-TO-SAH was one of the head Chiefs of this tribe of the OTTAWAS. It seems he practiced polygamy, as he had at least four sons by different wives. NO-TIN-NO was the eldest son of the old Chief. He was a great speaker, but not as well known as his younger brother, WA-SE-ON, who was a powerful man.

WA-SE-ON had his Indian village about four miles northwest of present Waterville, which is located on the old Indian trail from Delta to Waterville and the Mamee River settlements. In looking at a map of present Ohio, I would judge that Whitehouse now stands about where this village of Chief WA-SE-ON then was located. But since the braves had such a short distance to go to the trading centers along the Maumee, wise old WA-SE-ON decided to remove his village further from the river, and at the time the Indians and the Government decided to peacefully settle their differences concerning this land - about 1832 - we find the village of Chief WA-SE-ON was located just south of present Wauseon on a rise of ground, that is still called "Indian Hill". It is not much of a hill, and has mostly disappeared as cultivation extends almost over the entire plot.

It is recorded that WA-SE-ON was almost six feet tall, and weighed some 200 pounds, which is heavy for most young Indians.

OTTOKKEE was the older brother of WA-SE-ON, and the next younger brother of NO-TIN-NO. Chief OTTOKKEE was also noted for his great strength, and was a fine speaker for his tribe.

Some years ago, the village of the Ottawas was called AETNA by the white men, and is now known as WINAMEG for one of the Indian chiefs. Aetna and Winameg as towns have always been rather confusing to me, as they seem to belong to the same early village. Once it was an important Indian trading corner. There is a nice old fashioned grocery store still doing business at Winameg. A few nicely kept houses and a nice school are at the main corners of the two old Indian trails.

An early block house was built at Winameg by the soldiers who were stationed there, but it was consumed by a fire which started from the chimney on Monday, May 20, 1879. And in the spring of 1832, two years before the first land sales to private owners, a trading house was built for EDWARD HOWARD. A son of Capt. DAVE WILKINSON was put in charge of the trading house, and we find the following items were handled at the trading house . . . Mainly, the Indians preferred large blankets of red and green, and a white and black stripe woven at the ends. Also, they exchanged furs for such items as salt, syrup, some flour, tobacco, and materials of turkey red calico and Merrimac blue, with a few lighter colored materials. Large cotton handkerchiefs were used as head turbans, and also guns, tomahawks, shot and shells, powder, butcher knives, rings for nose or ears, beads, and small bells for on the sides of the Indians' breeches were most popular items handled by the traders.

The Indians, after years of association with the white men, also loved fancy saddles and bridles for their horses. The earliest American Indians had no way of travel, except walking or by canoes, until the Spaniards invaded the southern shores of the American conti-

nent, and brought horses with them. I do not know if the early Indians had some sort of horse or not, but mostly we read of the influence upon the early Indians by the Spaniards. The Indians loved horses and their dogs.

I can remember when I was a little girl, in Horton, Kansas, seeing the Indians walk into town with three or four dogs following, and they would stand and talk for hours on the streets, while their dogs slept peacefully in the sunshine waiting for their master to start back to the Indian Reservation. The Indian agency building and headquarters of the nearby reservation of the Kick-a-poo tribe is at Horton. My father used to work on the reservation buildings as a carpenter, and one time he brought me a doll made at the reservation. Her body was made of feed bags, and her hair long black horse hair, and her woolen dress was trimmed with brightly colored little beads. Poor little Kick-a-poo, as I always called her, has seen much use, and her beads have faded, and her hair is now missing. And I remember the big dances the tribe often held. They made so much noise we could hear them in Horton, several miles away! I imagine that the early Indian tribes also had such wild dances.

There is a small Indian village mentioned as being located on the old Indian trail from Defiance, to Detroit, about half way between the two early forts and towns. I have studied the maps of our county, and it seems that this little village, called Aw-pa-to-wa-jowin, the "half way place" would be located very near present Delta, in Fulton Co. Delta would be about a half way place between the two forts by the old Indian trail.

I found an interesting story of the prices paid by the early fur traders, which shows the kind of animals that then roamed our fair county. Bear, wolf, otter, mink, muskrat, raccoon, fisher, fox, and a few beavers were among the main animals trapped by both the Indians and the white hunters. A good bear skin was worth \$3 to \$4 each, and same for an otter; 40¢ for muskrat, 30¢ for mink, 50¢ for fox, \$2 for fisher, 25¢ for wolf, and 25¢ for a coon skin. Deer skins must have been plentiful, as they brought from 75¢ to \$1.25 each on the Indian trading markets, while a silver fox skin was worth \$25 to \$75.

Mention is made of one of the great hunters who came early to this county - DAVID WHITE from New York State. He was a son of PARKER WHITE, and when game became less plentiful, DAVID went into northern Michigan for some years to hunt. The WHITE family will be taken up as an early settler at a different time.