

A HISTORY OF THE BROTHERTOWN INDIANS.

The following material is a record of their activities in Wisconsin, at Brothertown, from 1831 to 1934, inclusive, as related by Mr. O.E.Heller at the exercises at Brothertown, Aug. 5, conducted by the Baptist Churches of this state, commemorating the founding of the first Baptist Church in this state.

In the year of 1831 the east shore of Lake Winnebago was a vast wilderness. Colwert Pier, the first settler of Fond du Lac, wrote that it was the densest, and in places the most dismal forest he had ever seen. The only means of travel were by way of the lake, and a dim Indian trail. Such was the country that William Dick, Elkanah Dick, David Johnson, Isaac Scipio, Randall Abner, and Thomas Commuck found when they arrived in the early summer of 1831.

We have often wondered how they passed through that first long winter, as they were compelled to boat or pack all of their food and supplies from Green Bay, fifty miles away, but evidently they were satisfied with their new home, for in the spring of 1832, the schooner "President" brought Alex Dick, Thomas and Daniel Dick, sons of Elder Thomas Dick, William Johnson, John Seketer, John Adams, and Nathan Paul to Green Bay. Thomas Dick was later killed by the Menominee Indians.

More settlers arrived in 1833, and when Elder Thomas Dick arrived in 1834 there were nearly eighty people here to greet him. He conducted services in the home of the first settler, William Dick, which was located about forty rods north of the Brothertown cheese factory. Services were held here until the first school house was built, after which they were held in the school.

The Indians also established a court, conducted on the same plan as the old Peacemakers Court. They were well qualified to do this, as they had with them all of the old peacemakers who had served in New York, namely, William Dick, Randall Abner, George Sampson, John Johnson Sr., John Johnson, Jr., Samuel Scipio, and others.

In 1835 the settlers employed Moody Mann, a millwright, to erect a

gristmill and sawmill. Here they ground all the grain for miles around, receiving it from points as distant as Fond du Lac and Oshkosh.

Building of the military road from Fort Howard, Green Bay, to Fort Winnebago, Portage, was undertaken by the government in 1836. It was not much of a road, even for those days, and could only be used in dry weather, or after the ground had frozen. In the same year the Rev. Cutting Marsh, a Presbyterian minister, built a mission house at Stockbridge.

In 1837 the first crime was committed. ^{Joseph} ~~John~~ Palmer, a Brothertown Indian, was returning from Green Bay on July 3, with a jug of whisky. Two Stockbridge Indians by the name of Konkapot endeavored to take it away from him and in the fight that followed, one of the Konkapot boys struck Palmer on the head with an ax and killed him. On the 5th of July Konkapot was arrested and a joint trial was held by both Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians. Konkapot was found guilty and sentenced to be hung on the 24th day of October, 1837. The place of hanging was to be on the division line between the two reservations. We believe this to be the ^{second} ~~only~~ verdict of death in the state.

On the night of Oct. 23, some of Konkapot's friends rowed up the lake, broke into the house that was used as jail, and liberated him. They gave him a boat, which enabled him to cross the lake, and nothing more was ever heard of him.

In 1838 the first mail route was established between Green Bay and Portage. One trip to Portage, and return, was made each week. The service was let by contract. Samuel Newland was the first carrier, and his salary was \$1200 per year.

By an act of Congress, passed in 1839, citizenship was conferred on the Brothertown Indians, and they were granted a tract of land four miles wide, and eight miles long, with an area of 23,040 acres. This tract of land was surveyed in 1840 by G.W. Feathersonhaugh, and divided in 100 acre lots, and each Indian was allotted 60 ¹/₂ acres. The land had previously been surveyed by ^{under the supervision of Thomas Deen} Jeremiah Manchester, in 1834, and the township was known as Manchester until 1856.

The first county election was held in the year 1840. The polls were opened at the home of Elkanah Dick, and in the Mission House at Stockbridge. John Johnson, Sr., Daniel Dick, and David Fowler were elected County commissioners, and all the other offices were filled by Brothertown Indians. The census taken at this time placed the population of Calumet County at 270, of which 250 were Indians.

In 1842 the government established a postoffice at Brothertown and called it Pequot. Prior to this the village had been called Deansburgh, in honor of Thomas Dean, the Quaker, who had acted as Indian agent, lawyer, and surveyor, and was called by them, their "White Father." It was he who helped them select their new home in Wisconsin. The postoffice retained the name Pequot until 1857, when it was changed to Brothertown. It was closed in 1903, and it seems fitting that the last postmaster should be Edgar Dick, a grandson of the first settler, William Dick.

In the year 1842, Randall Abner, J.C. Hammer, David Wiggins, William Fowler, and Hezekiah Fowler, as trustees for the Methodist Episcopal church, bought from Thomas Commuck a parcel of land for \$35, on which was erected the church which is still standing in the village.

Peter Hotaling
~~Stephan Houghtaling~~ brought a boat from Buffalo to Green Bay and up the Fox River to Brothertown in 1843. The Brothertown Indians overhauled the hull and repalced the woodwork, after which it was towed to Taycheedah, and the engine was overhauled. They gave it the name Manchester, and it was considered a very good boat, but very slow. It required one day to run from Fond du Lac to Neenah and on one trip, it took eleven days to tow a raft of logs from Oshkosh to Fond du Lac.

In 1846 Benjamin Garret Fowler arrived with a group of Free Will Baptists. Mr. Fowler died in 1848.

In 1848 the mill was rebuilt and converted into both a grist mill and a sawmill. A boiler and engine were installed and it was said that at certain seasons of the year the mill operated 24 hours a day.

Moody Mann, the village millwright, was elected the first county judge

in 1852. He held court in his tavern which was located a quarter of a mile south of the village.

Recently we have found what we believe to be the last minutes of the old Baptist congregation. The record reads as follows:

Met at the house of William Dick, Esq. on the 13th day of Feb., 1852.

- 1-- Resolved John Johnson, Sr., to officiate as church clerk.
- 2-- That James Niles officiate as deacon of church.
- 3-- That Daniel Dick, first chosen as Moderator in behalf of the closed Baptist church, organized on the day and year aforesaid, and witnessed by our signatures of the same.

Daniel Dick

Patience Seketer

James Niles

Emeline Reed

Hannah Dick

Joseph Osborn

Catherine Dick

John Johnson, Sr.

Mercy Johnson

In 1855 W. H. Dick served his last term as assemblyman. Previous to this he had served a term, as had also William Fowler, and Alonzo D. Dick.

Until 1857 the county officers held their offices in their homes. Court and county proceedings were held at Stockbridge, but Chilton had been selected as the county seat and the court house had been finished, so that from this date all county proceedings were conducted at Chilton. Thereafter the Indians were gradually eliminated from county offices. The last to serve were L.P. Fowler, as register of deeds, and Orasmus D. Fowler as county treasurer.

The Brothertown settlement furnished 70 men to the Civil War, in the 1860's for the Union cause. Some served with the cavalry in Missouri, some with the army of the Potomac, but the most of them were in the famous 21st Wisconsin regiment, which marched with Sherman to the sea.

In 1882 President Rutherford B. Hayes authorized Layton Dick, sr., L.S. Fowler, David Fowler, and O.G. Fowler as trustees of the Brothertown Indians to sell all unallotted tracts of land, and from this date they gradually

disposed of their land until now they own only a few acres. Of the original 300 people we have only 29 Indians left in the Town of Brothertown today.

During the World War the settlement again furnished its quota of men, most of them enlisting in the Rainbow and Red Arrow divisions, and we again find the old names on the roster, such as Niles, Kindness, Hammer, Fowler, Shelley, and Johnson. If you would know what manner of soldiers this latter generation made, just ask their commanding officers, and their buddies.

This we leave them and we hope the next 100 years will deal more kindly with them than the last.
