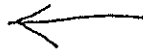


COW-TUCK-MUCK
POKAGON BAND POTAWATOMI

Dowagiac Daily News
January 31, 1908
Dowagiac, Michigan



Indian Williams, the father of Mrs. Thomas Winchester of this city is dead at his home near Hartford at the age of more than 100 years, and thus has passed away one of the oldest members of the Pokagon band of Potawatomi Indians and the oldest reputed resident of Van Buren County.

Peter Cow-Tuck-Muck is the name by which he is known to his Indian friends, but he has for years been known as "Indian Williams."

The interesting story of his life is told in The Hartford Day Spring to which The Daily News is indebted for the accompanying picture.

Peter Catuckmuck, Sr., or "Indian" Williams as he was more familiarly known to almost every resident of this section and who was accorded the distinction of being the oldest member of the Pokagon band of Potawatomi Indians if not the oldest resident of Van Buren County, died last Friday morning at the age of 100. He was also one of the band's most interesting characters. A Day Spring representative who visited him at his home the Sunday before his death, found the centenarian confined to his bed, emaciated and suffering severely from a dropsical affection, but a remarkable example of the wonderful vitality and longevity of his race. Speaking partly in the English and partly in the Potawatomi language with his son as interpreter, he told the story of his life.

He was born at Detroit in the month of May 1807, a century ago. He professed a childish recollection of Detroit, then a settlement of but a few hundred people and composed entirely of Indians and French, the only business activity being the French trading post. At the age of five years, with 140 of

his tribe's people, he journeyed through the forests, over Potawatomi Indian trails, to the site of the present village of Athens in Calhoun County. He appeared to possess a vivid recollection of his trip, describing the method in which the effects of the band and the children, himself included, were transported upon pack ponies, the balance of the party making the journey on foot. Athens was then but a French trading post, where the Indian exchanged the furs for the meagre ware afforded by the French, and in this environment he grew to young manhood.

He recalled the "falling of the stars" in 1833 and described the hunting lodge in which he was then located on the banks of "Pine Creek," a stream in that vicinity. It was soon after this that he visited the present site of the city of Niles, the first white settlement he ever saw. Niles then boasted of nearly three hundred inhabitants, and was the main trading post for the Indians of this section.

At about this time he was converted to the Catholic faith, and in lieu of the Indian name of Catuckmuck he became known by the surname of Williams. It was over seventy years ago that he was married in Silver Creek to Miss Kedasmeelieve Saugne by the Reverend Father McCoy of Niles. She died at Rush Lake 58 years ago, and he was later remarried, the second wife surviving.

After spending the few months at Watervliet he settled in the forest near Paw Paw, and after a residence there of twenty years, he came to Hartford fifty years ago. True to his early environment he retained his love of the wild and found his favorite occupation in trapping along the Paw Paw river thickets. A few years ago, with money received from the government in settlement of the Indian claims to Chicago lake front property, he purchased a forty acre farm on the river bank.

One of the most interesting reminiscences was of the last Indian battle between the Potawatomi, Ottawas and Chippewas and the western Indians which took place on the present site of Muskegon County over seventy years ago and in which the eastern tribes were driven out of this section. He also recalled earlier conflicts in which he participated.

Fire arms had not yet been acquired by the Indians, tomahawks and bows and arrows being the weapons used in all of them.

"Indian" Williams was intelligent, above the average of his race, and possessed a reputation for the strictest integrity. One of his peculiar characteristics was the setting of the exact day upon which he would meet an obligation, however small, and it said that he never failed his promise. He was unable to read English, but could read a book printed in the Chippewa language, a translation of Catholic teachings, and up to the time of his death would pursue the study of the work without the aid of glasses.

He was never addicted to the use of tobacco or intoxicants. He leaves four sons, Peter and Frank Williams of Hartford, and John and Michael Williams of Silver Creek and one daughter, Mrs. Thomas Winchester. His funeral was at the Catholic church in this village Monday morning, interment taking place at Rush Lake.